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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[GONE.]

AN INJURED WOMAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Double Engagement," &c., &c.

CHAPTER V.

A VISIT FROM SIR ARCHIBALD.

A shaft that leaves dark venom in the wound,
A frost that all the bnd of manhood nips,
A sea of passion in which true love is drowned,
A day when love's own heart has felt eclipse.

DAVID MOORE left his work about eight o'clock and hurried towards Peckham upon the summit of tram car, his mind in a somewhat turbid mood, for he had heard of the incarceration of Tom Kelly during the day. Jane had written to him setting forth what had happened and urging him to come and see her that evening as soon as possible.

As he was employed at the "case" as compositor there was no need for any radical change of attire, and a rapid wash and brush up at the office he deemed sufficient. A little before nine he presented himself at the house in Maismore Square.

Jane was alone at work, and in a grave and quiet mood. The evening being chilly a fire was burning in the grate, and David, after a greeting in accordance with his position of lover, drew a chair up on the hearth and filled his pipe.

"You don't mind smoking, I hope," he said.
"Is your work very particular?"

"I don't mind a pipe in the room," she replied, "but I must ask you not to indulge in any more of the cigars you smoked on Tuesday. The odour is barely gone yet, and Mrs. Gingall was quite rude about the fumes that were in her dress."

"I prefer a pipe," David rejoined, "and I brought the cigars because I thought they were more in harmony—you know what I mean. Now, Janey, tell me what this business of your father's is about."

She told him the story, how the money was obtained, the defaulter's departure, and the result. David did not know much about law, but he was inclined to think it a bad business.

"Fifty pounds is such a lot of money," he said, "and then there will be law costs and what not. Lawyers and county-court people have no mercy on a man. But I've a matter of thirty pounds—"

"Which is not enough," interfered Jane, "and I am told that the whole must be paid. Rhoda is out, but I expect her back shortly. She has some friend who she believes will help us. We will wait until she returns and talk it over together."

David was content, and they talked of other things of interest to themselves, their present and future prospects, and of certain valuable bargains in second-hand furniture that were exhibited at a shop in the Old Kent Road. In this way they passed the time until ten o'clock, when a cab rolled into the square and drew up at the door.

"Who can that be?" cried Jane, springing up. "Perhaps they have released father."

David hurried to the door to see, and met Rhoda, who was coming in with a radiant face. She greeted him with more warmth than usual,

shook hands, and said she was very pleased to see him.

"Have you three shillings," she asked, "to pay the cabman? I have nothing but notes."

"Nothing but notes?" The eyes of David opened so wide that it seemed a problematical matter if ever he would close them again, and he felt in his pocket for the required small change. His mouth opened and shut slowly like one of those mechanical mouths one sees in dentists' windows.

"Perhaps you will pay the man, David," said Rhoda, "and give him sixpence extra. He has driven me very well."

David like a man in a dream went out and gave the driver three shillings and sixpence, receiving a touch of the hat and a "Thank you, sir," in recognition of the additional coin. Then he went back to the workroom and found Jane sitting with her work idle on her lap, staring at her sister with something like the intensity he had shown.

"Yes, dearest," Rhoda was saying, "I have the money and a little more, and the kind friend who has given it to me is coming to see us. I thought Sunday afternoon the most suitable time, for then all the work can be put away and we can make the place more presentable."

"But who is your friend?" asked David.

"Wait and see," replied Rhoda, with a merry laugh. "And now, David, will you be so good as to give me change for a ten-pound note?"

"A ten-pound note?" exclaimed David, breathlessly.

"Yes, and you look as if you suspected me of stealing it. If you have not the change—"

"Which I haven't," David said. "Fancy me

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walking about with ten pounds in my pocket. I should be afraid of garrottes."

"Then go to the Maismore Arms and get it for me, there's a good boy. While you are gone Jane and I will lay supper for you, and I have a rare treat for you in this parcel." She brought it out from under her jacket. "A splendid lobster. There!"

"What's come to her?" David asked, looking about him in a dazed fashion. "Has she got hold of that chap in the pantomime who wore a wonderful cap and could have just what he wished for?"

"You must not be curious," Rhoda said, "or you will not have any supper. Now run away, dear, get me the change, and bring yourself in a bottle of Bass's pale ale."

Unable to grasp the entire position he yet had sufficient presence of mind left to understand what was required of him, and with his hat on the hind part before, and holding the note tightly clenched in his hand, he went upon his errand.

The lobster with bread and butter and condiments was put upon the table, and when David returned with the change and a couple of bottles of pale ale the feast began. Rhoda was in the highest spirits, but Jane was sad and David puzzled, and she did nearly all the talking.

"And I am going to release father to-morrow," she said, "and bring him back here fresh—think of that, Jane."

"I am thinking of it," Jane replied. "But I do not quite understand how it has been done."

"Oh, you shall know everything before long," Rhoda said, nodding her head sagaciously. "It is not such a mighty secret after all, but I must keep it until father is here to-morrow. Won't he be delighted when he knows who is coming to see him?"

"Does he know him, Rhoda?"

"No, Jane, he doesn't, but he will, nevertheless, be glad to see him, for he is a man of high position and a gentleman."

A terrified look sprang into Jane's face, but Rhoda perceiving it got up from her seat, laughing heartily, and embracing her called her a "dear old goose," and a "stupid little woman," and many other endearing titles. Then she pinched David's ear and told him to collect his scattered wits and sitting down in her chair laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks.

"And it is all for joy," she said. "So let me see you both cheerful. All our trouble is over."

But neither David nor Jane could respond at all cheerfully. While there was mystery in this sudden acquirement of a large sum of money they could not be at ease. But the more lugubrious their looks became the more Rhoda laughed and bantered them.

"I daresay you think I have sold myself to a gentleman who shall be nameless," she said. "Like the young fellow in prison you and I used to read about. Don't you remember, Jane?"

"You have read more of such stories than I," Jane replied. "I don't care much for the romantic stuff. It is not at all like real life."

"That is, common life," Rhoda rejoined. "But you can put romance into THAT if you like to try. I think there will be romance in mine. Well, good night, children; I hope you won't allow the little secret I am keeping to disturb your rest."

After she was gone David and Jane talked over the mystery of the evening, but could make nothing of it. David would only suppose that Rhoda had "found the money in the street," or had discovered a loan society with a tender-hearted secretary; both ideas being derided by Jane, whose thoughts were turned in another direction with a vague, mystic terrible something she dare not think of lying ahead.

Rhoda was awake in the morning and was off early, taking a cab as before with the ease and coolness of a woman of thirty who had been accustomed to travelling all her life. This time her destination was Holloway Prison, where her father was confined, and being armed with the open sesame that would set him free she soon brought him forth rejoicing.

Tom Kelly had scarce expected to be released, and had not even dreamt of so sudden a termination to his residence in that most undesirable place, and he was in ecstasies, embracing Rhoda over and over again and calling her a vast number of endearing names.

"And how did you girls manage to get the money?" he asked, as they were returning homeward in the cab that had taken Rhoda thither.

"Jane had nothing to do with it," she replied. "I borrowed the money of a very kind friend, and will tell you all about it. Shall we have a swell luncheon before we go home?"

"A swell luncheon, Rhoda? Rather, if we can afford it. How much money have you left?"

"Oh, plenty—pounds; and if you are a good boy you shall have a nice crisp five-pound note to put into your pocket. Now, where shall we go to? You know more about swell places than I do."

"We must go up West to Verey's, Spitam's or Blanchard's. Shall we say Verey's?"

"Verey's, be it," said Rhoda, gaily, and thither the cabmen was directed to proceed.

Tom Kelly was puzzled, as Jane and David Moore had been, but he was not at all anxious or disturbed. It was enough for him that he was free and that he and his favourite daughter were going to make a "jolly day" of it. It was a stroke of good luck any way, and that was enough for him.

Over a luncheon the story was told. Rhoda frankly confessed everything. Her acquaintance with Vesey Sutherland, the parting, her despair when she heard her father was in prison, her effort to get the money of her lover, its failure, and her subsequent application to Sir Archibald.

"Who was so kind and gentle to me," Rhoda said, "and as courteous as Sir Lancelot must have been; and he is so handsome that you don't think of his age when you are talking to him. I never saw such beautiful white hair and splendid dark eyes."

"And he was kind to you, Rhoda," said Tom Kelly, thoughtfully.

"Oh, very, very kind."

"I wonder if they have a Landed Gentry Book here," said Tom Kelly. "The bell is near you, Rhoda, ring it please."

The waiter found the book required and Kelly turned to the list of the Sutherlands. He soon found the name of Sir Archibald and the history of his family and estate set forth, and he read it carefully over to the end.

"He'll do," he muttered. "By Jove, if he should— But I won't hope for too much. He may be only a philanthropic fellow going about doing good—a sort of people I hate. Rhoda, I see your friend is all right, Sir Archibald Sutherland—residence, Powerscourt—rent roll, upwards of ten thousand a year—and not married yet."

"He must find his life very lonely," said Rhoda, thoughtfully. "He said nothing about it when I went to ask him for the money. He is coming to see us on Sunday."

"To see us—at Maismore Square?"

"Yes, in the afternoon."

"By George!" exclaimed Tom Kelly, drawing a deep breath. "He's hard hit and means business. Rhoda, play your cards well and you will be Lady Sutherland, mistress of Powerscourt, with ten thousand a year to play with. If it ever come to that you will not forget your poor, broken-down old father?"

It was a favourite idea of his to allude to himself as being broken down, as if he had at one time been something of a very high grade and had lost both fortune and position, and among many who were believers in it Rhoda stood foremost as the possessor of the strongest faith.

"I will make you a very handsome allowance," replied Rhoda, with a smile, "if ever I AM Lady Sutherland. But I don't think Sir Archibald cares for me except in a fatherly way. He was so kind, you can't think."

"No doubt," said Tom Kelly, drily: "there are a great many nice, fatherly old gentlemen about, and their parental affection for young

and pretty girls is something overwhelming. Now, Rhoda, just listen to me. You love your father, don't you?"

"Oh, dearly, dearly I!"

"And you don't like to see him living in the shambling, out-at-elbow kind of way he has to do, when he has all the aspirations and tastes of a gentleman?"

"I have always felt so sorry for you, dear," Rhoda said, with tears in her eyes.

"Very well, darling," he rejoined, as he finished the last glass of a pint of sherry and rose up, "then if you can help him in any way, or lift him out of his beggarly life, I am sure you will do so."

The love written on her face as she laid a hand upon his arm and promised to make any sacrifice for him ought to have touched his heart more nearly and made him ashamed of asking his daughter to lift him out of the mire of his own sloth and recklessness, but he was too selfish to feel more than pleased at her ready acquiescence to his wishes.

Rhoda gave him a five-pound note to pay the bill and another to put in his pocket, and then again the cab was brought into requisition and they went home gaily, Tom Kelly smoking a cigar that cost a shilling and already discounting in his mind the future that was to come to him through Rhoda, by laying out plans for personal enjoyment and astonishing Peckham and the natives generally.

There was not long to wait for Sunday, but time flagged most heavily. Saturday was a most weary day, and had she not been engaged in improving and decorating their sitting-room would have been unbearable.

She bought a drapery to hide the dingy carpet, and some pictures for the walls, a vase or two and some flowers. She would have done more, but Jane prohibited it.

"The money given you," she said, "was given in charity and it is not right, nor will your friend, Sir Archibald, expect to find it laid out in preparations to receive him."

Rhoda had been unable to keep her secret any longer, and that evening told Jane who was coming. Jane was more alarmed than dismayed at the prospect of a baronet's visit, but Rhoda soothed her by talking of his venerable appearance and fatherly ways, so that she was at length induced to look forward to meeting with a benevolent old man, who was desirous of seeing the result of his charitable work.

"The picture of a father restored to his family is what he wishes to look upon," she persuaded herself to think, and was almost happy and contented.

On Sunday the Kellys dined early, and David Moore came to dinner. A shoulder of mutton cooked at the baker's, a boiled pudding and potatoes, formed the solids, and half a dozen bottles of bitter beer and one of whisky the liquids.

Rhoda did not eat much dinner. The meat was underdone and the potatoes over-boiled, and everything was so different to that hot luncheon at Verey's, where the cook was a master of his art and sent up pictures of eatables to the table. She was also a little excited, for at the hour for Sir Archibald to arrive drew near a nervousness grew upon her. The conviction that there was an incongruity between him and Maismore Square with its dingy, semi-genteel belongings was but too apparent.

David Moore was not quite at his ease. "Swell" society was a thing he knew very little of, and he was sure he should not like it. A vision of a stiff, haughty aristocrat with a deep bass voice, such as he had seen on the Surrey boards lavishing his gold for improper purposes and crushing the humble peasant beneath his iron heel, had haunted him all the morning, and he had made great efforts to adorn his person in a manner suitable for the occasion.

But when he appeared at the house he saw at once that he was a failure. Jane said his waistcoat was too open in its cut, and Rhoda laughed at his narrow maroon tie and his studs. She also plainly told him that he need not have been so lavish with oil for his hair, and of course he was angry.

Being there he was obliged to stay, but he was sorry he had come at all. However, if the haughty aristocrat came lording it over him he was not going to stand it, and he would give him as good as he sent whatever might be the consequences.

After dinner Tom Kelly and David wanted to smoke and Rhoda despatched them upstairs to the former's room. She did not know whether Sir Archibald smoked or not, and if he were averse to it he ought not to be compelled to sit among the fumes of tobacco.

So the two men—David in rather a dogged way—took their pipes and tobacco, the bottle of whiskey and cold water aloft, and the girls put the room right, and opened the windows to let out the aroma of baked mutton, which invariably has a lingering tendency.

At three o'clock the baronet was expected, and a few minutes after that hour a cab rolled into the square, and Sir Archibald was seen directing the driver, with the neatest of umbrellas, to his destination.

Jane did servant's duty and opened the door, but the baronet knew who she was at a glance.

"My dear Miss Kelly," he said, "how kind of you. I am pleased to make your acquaintance, and I trust my coming has not disarranged your afternoon."

"No, Sir Archibald," replied Jane, quietly, "we expected you, and are glad to see you."

He liked the girl's manner, and she liking him, they were friends immediately. Rhoda he greeted as a young friend with whom he was perfectly acquainted, and, after a little demurring, accepted the easy chair prepared for him.

"Age, I know, has its privileges," he said, "and one of them is to monopolise the comforts of every place it goes to."

The girls laughed at the idea of his talking of age, and Jane went up to fetch her father and lover down and to give them a hint to get rid of as much tobacco odour as they could before they appeared. The baronet and Rhoda had ten minutes together.

Tom Kelly was prepared to be deferential and agreeable, but he was surprised at the geniality of the baronet, and David Moore melted under it. All his obstinacy and awkwardness faded away, and they were all soon engaged in talking on such topics as Sir Archibald suggested, topics he skilfully chose as suitable to those around him.

For all that eye could see, that dingy room, with its meagre furniture, was a class of place he had been familiar with all his life. Not a glance or a word showed that there was aught in it but what was eminently pleasing to him, and when he, after appealing to Rhoda and Jane, suggested that the gentlemen should try one of his cigars, he had put Tom Kelly into the seventh heaven and plunged David Moore into an abyss of repentance.

Nor was there anything to show that he had any ulterior motive in his coming. The question of the "few pounds" he had lent Rhoda he put aside with the first word of gratitude from his host.

It was nothing, he said, but what any idle man with a superfluity of cash would do, and if they had any regard for him they would never name it again. He was rejoiced to see the family circle complete, and he trusted it would remain so.

The tea at five o'clock—with bread and butter and shrimps—he partook of with relish, and complimented Jane upon her skill in brewing the Chinese herb.

"A rare gift," he said, "so few people understand the art. Indeed, it is a matter of instinct."

But through all this he preserved a certain quiet dignity that kept off Tom Kelly's usual friendly proceedings. If any ordinary man had lent or given him fifty pounds he would have called him a good fellow, slapped him on the back, wrung his hand a score of times, and sworn that he would die for him if need be; but after the first reference to the money transaction and the reply he received he let it drop.

Sir Archibald remained until seven, and when

he left Tom Kelly offered to get him a cab. The offer was politely refused.

"I am going to stroll back," he said, "and if you like to walk a little way with me, I shall be glad of your company."

Tom Kelly would be delighted, and furthermore played into the hands of his aristocratic guest by suggesting that David and Jane, perhaps, had a little to say to each other, and Rhoda had better come too.

A proposition Rhoda blushingly assented to and Sir Archibald expressed himself pleased with. So they went, and left the lovers together.

"And what do you think of it, David?" asked Jane, when a few natural lover-like demonstrations had come to an end, "what do you think of Sir Archibald?"

David did not immediately reply, being at a loss to find words sufficiently deep to express his feelings, but at last he got something near the mark.

"I think," he said, "that he is a brick—a regular one—that's what he is."

CHAPTER VI.

ONE LESS AT HOME.

Though Heaven forbids my wrath to swell,
I curse the hand by which she fell,
That makes her life a road to hell.
My darling's gone from me.
For if where all the graces shine—
Oh, if on earth there's aught sublime,
My darling, all these charms were thine—
They centred all in thee.

The baronet did not visit the home of the Kellys again, but a few days afterwards he sent the head of the family an invitation to dine with him at Purser's Hotel, and Tom Kelly, acting under Rhoda's advice, hired a dress suit for the occasion.

The early part of the day set apart for this great event he spent in going the rounds of his favourite bars and billiard-rooms, where he talked of "his old friend, Sir Archibald Sutherland, turning up" and being true to "the friendship of his boyhood."

"He was always a good fellow," Tom said, jauntily, "and as soon as he found out where I was living he came to see me, and now to-night I am to dine with him. We were inseparable when young, and I daresay that we shall be on the same footing now."

The set Tom Kelly mixed with were men not given to be nice in their language, and to give and take the lie was a common thing with them. Doubters were not wanting now, but these were shown the letter of invitation with the Sutherland seal, and became unwilling believers.

"I always thought you were a real swell," said a little tuft-hunter, "although others said you were all bunkum and brag."

"Anyhow," replied Tom, "you have the proof of it now."

He dressed early and went and had a nip or two of drink in those haunts to show his white tie and general get-up. The effect was not bad, for he had good looks of a rakish sort, and a figure that good clothes settled upon easily. He was flush of money and treated everybody to drink and cigars, and quite a little crowd of toadies and admirers saw him start at seven o'clock for Purser's Hotel.

After that dinner Tom Kelly was very flush of money, and the glories of it were the talk of Peckham. The number of courses, the wine, the cigars, the state saloon in which he dined, and the jolly goodfellowship of Sir Archibald were themes that neither him nor his listeners seemed to tire of—the listeners getting their drink for nothing were most enthusiastic.

Meanwhile, how fared it with Rhoda? After the visit of the baronet her whole manner changed towards her sister. It was not less kind than usual, but she took the lead in everything and assumed an independence she had never shown before.

David Moore she rather patronised, but treated him on the whole very well.

She did not settle down to business, and she

was out a great deal—sometimes for the greater part of the day.

Sometimes her father left the house with her, but she always came home alone, and Jane only once ventured to ask her where she had been.

"For a walk," was the only answer she vouchsafed, and it was given in such a manner that Jane saw she had no intention of being more explicit either then or at any future time.

After her father dined at Purser's Jane heard nothing more direct from Sir Archibald, but in a fashionable paper Rhoda brought home and left lying about she saw a notice of his having left town for Powerscourt.

This was a great source of ease to her mind, and she thought little more of Rhoda's wandering abroad beyond regretting that so much of her time was idly spent.

Three weeks passed and there was no change in the position of any of them. Jane stayed at home and worked, David Moore came to see her with a devotion that distinguishes most men before the knot is tied; Tom Kelly spent money freely and bounced and swaggered, and Rhoda did a little needlework by fits and starts, and went out for hours at a time.

Early one September morning Jane came down to light her fire and prepare breakfast. Rhoda and her father she believed to be still asleep, but on reaching the hall she was amazed to find the front door unbolted. Having a distinct recollection of having chained and fastened it on the previous night, a terrible apprehension took possession of her.

With swift steps she ascended the stairs and knocked at the door of Rhoda's room. Getting no answer she turned the handle of the lock and looked in.

The bed unruffled told all she wanted to know, and her worst fears were confirmed.

But there was a letter lying on the table, a bulky letter, addressed to her, and with trembling hand she opened the envelope. A sheet of letter paper with a few words upon it and a number of crisp new bank-notes were inside.

The latter she threw aside, and the former she hurriedly read.

"MY DARLING JENNY,—I have left with one who loves me very, very dearly, and I have learnt to love him too. He has been good and generous to me and to father, and will always be so. He wishes to be generous to you also, and sends the enclosed two hundred pounds with his love. He has led me to believe that I can trust in him, and I trust in him fully. Good bye, darling, but do not be sad. We shall meet by-and-by and all be happy again.—Your loving sister,
"RHODA."

With rage and pity in her heart the usually pacific Jane hastened to the door of her father's room and called upon him to rise and come out to her.

"What is it?" he asked, sleepily, from within.

"Come here, I say," said Jane, imperiously, "I want you."

Tom Kelly tumbled out of bed, muttering and grumbling about being called so early, and in a minute or two appeared in an old faded dressing-gown and a smoking-cap upon his head—the picture of a Bacchanalian at an early hour.

"Now, then, what is it?" he growled. "Why have you called me?"

"Rhoda's gone," cried Jane, with a catching in her breath.

"Gone—where?"

"Gone with that white-haired, treacherous old villain, with the tongue of honey and the heart of a devil. Here is her letter—read it."

"I can't see so early," said Tom Kelly, with no very great outward signs of emotion, "my eyes are dim when I first get up."

"Come in here, into her room, and let me read it to you," cried Jane, seizing him by the arm. "Oh, what a pitiful story."

It was a strange and striking picture. The raffish fellow in his dressing-gown, with shaky hands and dim eyes, leaning against the wall while his daughter stood by the window and

read the letter aloud, hurling every word at him so that it sounded like a denunciation.

"There!" she cried, when she had finished, "you see the horrible mischief that has been done. Were you blind that you, as a man, could be deceived by his soft ways?"

"I don't know that we are deceived," said Tom Kelly, doggedly; "and he is awfully generous to you. Two hundred pounds are not to be sneezed at."

"Curse him money," cried Jane, with an intensity that caused her father to leave his lounging position and move a step towards the door. "What is that to honour? I would rather he had killed her, I might have pardoned him then, but I can never forgive him now, and I will curse him while I live."

"You may be putting yourself into a mighty heat about nothing," said Tom Kelly, with fearful coolness. "How do you know that Sir Archibald does not mean to run straight with her?"

"Has he 'run straight' as you call it?" demanded Jane. "Has his conduct been that of an honest man? Did he not pretend to leave London when he must have been hiding somewhere near her all the time? Oh! my poor Rhoda, my darling—darling sister. And he sends me money for her. I'll burn it—"

"No, you won't," said her father, with an angry frown. "I'm not going to stand by and see you do such a fool's trick as that. If you won't use it yourself give it to me."

"You will make me despise you," Jane said, as she cast the notes at his feet. "It appears to me that you have sold her. Did you know that that man was in the neighbourhood or did you not?"

"What I know I shall keep to myself," was the cool rejoinder, "and what I don't know is a thing you must find out. Rhoda is a girl with pluck and will look after herself. I'll trust her that far."

Hitherto Jane had shed no tears, and her eyes, hard and dry with the fierceness of her anger, were terrible to look upon. As her father answered her in his heartless way a little smile wreathed itself about her lips, and with head erect she swept by him and passed down the stairs.

"You are so impetuous, Jane," he said, as he followed after, trying by a softened tone to ameliorate her anger. "What am I to do?"

"Go and find the fellow and shoot him," she said.

"I think we had better wait a few days and see how things turn out," he whined. "I rather believe in Sir Archibald—"

"I see you will do nothing, and Rhoda is lost," interposed Jane. "Do not say anything more. You only add to my misery."

And from that hour the subject was one she would not permit him to discuss in her presence.

Her household duties were performed that morning with her accustomed care, and breakfast was ready at the usual hour. All day long she worked without shedding a single tear. At night she told David of her loss and extracted from him a promise that if ever he met Sir Archibald he would publicly thrash him. David accepted the commission without reluctance, for he was angry, as are most men when they find they have been deceived.

"And I bowed down to him," he said, "and thought him such a first-rate fellow, an oily-tongued old villain. Trust me, Jane, I'll only be glad of the chance to give him a pound-ing."

"You must give what spare time you have to finding his whereabouts," Jane said, "and when that is done I will tell you what to do."

"I hope I shall be able to do it out of business hours," he said, "for our people don't like men to be away."

"In business time or out of it," Jane said, "you must do as I bid you or you will never be my husband."

Then David, who loved her as he loved his life, faithfully promised to do her bidding, no

matter what might follow, little thinking how soon he would be called upon to keep his word.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

CHEMICAL RESEARCH BY MEANS OF PHOTOGRAPHY.—By the use of an electrical spark and a photographic apparatus the presence of very minute quantities of certain substances in certain liquids may be readily detected. The liquid to be examined is placed in a vessel, the sides of which are composed of quartz, which is one of the few purely transparent substances. If one part, by weight, of the colouring matter known as anthracene is mixed with fifty million times its weight of alcohol the presence of the colour may be detected by a gelatine plate photograph taken as above, which will show the characteristic bands of the absorbed rays pertaining to anthracene.

THE COLOURS OF FLOWERS.—Hitherto it has been supposed that the colours of flowers were due to so many different materials, each colour being a chemical combination having no relation with the others. But now, however, Professor Schuetzler, in a communication to the Vaudois Society of Natural Sciences, shows that, when the colour of a flower is extracted by placing the latter in alcohol, the addition of an acid or alkali will give all the colours that plants exhibit. Flowers of peony, for example, give when put into alcohol a violet-red liquid. If to this solution binoxalate of potassa (salt of sorrel) be added the colour becomes pure red. Soda causes it to change, according to quantity used, to violet, blue, or green. In the latter case the green liquid appears red by transmitted light, just as a solution of chlorophyl (the green colouring matter of leaves) does. The sepals of peony, which are green bordered with red, become entirely red when put into a solution of binoxalate of potassa. These changes of colour, which may be obtained at will, may well be produced in plants by the same causes, since in all plants there are always acid or alkaline matters. Moreover, it is quite certain that the change from green to red observed in leaves in autumn is due to the action of the tannin which they contain on the chlorophyl. Consequently, without wishing to affirm it absolutely, Professor Schuetzler believes that a priori there is in all plants but one colouring matter—chlorophyl—which, becoming modified by certain agents, gives all the tints that flowers and leaves exhibit. As for white flowers, it is well known that their want of colour is due to the fact that their cells are filled with a colourless fluid, and that their opacity proceeds from the air contained in the interspaces. When such flowers are placed under the receiver of an air-pump they are seen to lose their opacity and become transparent in measure as the air is exhausted.

PILOCARPIN IN DIPHTHERIA.—The especial attention of physicians is called to the extraordinary success which is now reported in Germany in diphtheria from the muriate of pilocarpin. It is given in ordinary doses internally, and a large number of cases have been reported by different physicians wherein the results were astonishingly good. As soon as the pilocarpin exercises its specific effect on the salivary glands the false membrane detaches, the inflammatory phenomena disappear, and improvement begins.

LUMINOUS PAINT.—According to a contemporary luminous paint is getting into quite extensive use in this country. Mention is made of offices coated with the paint which give great satisfaction to the occupants. The effect is that of a subdued light, every object in the room being clearly visible, so that in a room so treated one could enter without a light and find any desired article. The luminous paint is excited by the ordinary daylight, and its effect is said to continue for about thirteen hours, so that it is well adapted for painting bedroom ceilings, passages that are dark at night, and other places where lamps are objectionable or considered

necessary. For staircases and passages a mere band of the paint will serve as a guide, and costs but a trifle. For outdoor purposes the oil paint is used, but for ceilings and walls the luminous paint, mixed with water and special size, can be used the same as ordinary whitewash, and presents a similar appearance in the daylight. By the recent discovery that it can be applied as ordinary whitewash considerably expands the field of its usefulness. Sheets of glass coated with the paint are in use in some of the vessels of the navy, at the Waltham Powder Factory, at Young's paraffine works, and in the spirit vaults of several London docks; and now that by increased production and the use of water as the medium, its cost is reduced by one half, it will probably be extensively used for painting walls and ceilings. The ordinary form of oil paint has already been applied in many ways, to statues and busts, to toys, to clock faces, to name plates and numbers on house doors, and to notice boards, such as "Mind the step," "To let," etc. The paint emits light without combustion, and therefore does not vitiate the atmosphere. Several experimental carriages are now running on different railways, the paint being used instead of lamps, which are necessary all day on account of the line passing through occasional tunnels.

THE PHOTOPHONE.—The opinion is gaining ground, especially among French savants, that the musical sounds produced by Professor Bell in disks of various substances, such as mica, India-rubber, metal, and wood, by holding them in the path of a rapidly interrupted beam of light, are really due to heat and not to light. Radiophonic notes, such is the new term, have been obtained by M. Mercadier from ordinary gas lamps without employing lenses to concentrate the interrupted beam, by simply bringing the receiving disk near the source. Even a plate of copper heated to a bright red heat produced very distinct musical tones, which gradually died away as the plate cooled to a dull red followed by obscurity. The fact that when the receiving disks were coated with silver on the side next the light the effects were feeble, and that when coated with absorbent lampblack they were strong, would seem to tell against Professor Bell's conclusion that the sounds were due to light. It is a curious fact that when the radiometer was first brought out by Dr. Crookes he intimated his belief that its rotation was due to the impact of light waves; but heat is now known to be the cause of the motion.

VOLATILISATION OF CARBON.—A correspondent of "Nature," referring to a recent discussion in that journal, writes:—"I think the assumption of the impossibility of volatilising carbon by any heat which man can produce is not warranted by experience. Two or three facts in Despretz's account of a remarkable set of experiments which he made about thirty years ago seem to me to show it to be unfounded. He exposed rods of anthracite to the action of 125 Bunsens (zinc 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches high) and also to the solar focus of an annular lens of 36 inches diameter. The rods bent under the combined action, and even appeared to fuse! He also describes experiments with rods of sugar-charcoal under a battery of 500 similar cells. The electric egg was covered suddenly with a hard black crystalline powder. He thinks attempts to fuse carbon should be made in condensed nitrogen and in metallic vessels. In the same volume he says that with 600 cells rods of sugar-charcoal bend—swell at the ends—and when they touch, weld together, and their surfaces become metallic, like graphite. Diamonds heated in charcoal tubes were suddenly changed and became conductors. Still more remarkable effects were produced when he used collaterally with the 600 Bunsens 135 Muncké with zincs 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches high and 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. With these sugar-charcoal was volatilised immediately. It is to be noticed that Despretz in these experiments anticipated Dr. Siemens's electric furnace. He mentions that he fused 3,750 grains of platinum in a few minutes, and could have done more had he had a larger crucible."

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[SUNNY HOUSES.]

A BURIED SIN; OR, HAUNTED LIVES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Kate Branksome's Foe," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BITTER BITTEN.

A law there is of ancient fame,
By Nature's self in every land implanted;
Lex talionis is its Latin name;
But if an English term be wanted,
Give your next neighbour but a pat,
He'll give you back as good, and tell you—tit for tat.

ST. JOHN DARRELL has arrived at Freston Castle and has received a characteristic welcome from its inmates.

The earl greets him with heartiness bordering upon enthusiasm, Lord Ferrars with rough cordiality, Lady Clare with affectionate effusion, Blanche Carew with a shy gladness which is the sweetest welcome of all.

Mrs. Carew bestows a stiff bow and an icy commonplace about the weather. She preserves an armed truce for the present.

St. John and Mostyn Howard do not meet until introduced at dinner. Then they take stock of each other with that expressionless stare peculiar to Englishmen, and are alike favourably impressed.

Perhaps this is due to the fact that until they met each was slightly prejudiced. Mostyn was prepared (chiefly by Mrs. Carew's occasional innuendoes) to find Darrell a man approaching middle age, his countenance wearing a perpetual sneer at goodness and morality, and the unmistakable stamp of a libertine's excesses.

Instead of which he sees a handsome young fellow, whose usual air of gentle melancholy and ineffable boredom is not unattractive, and whose tranquil cynicism has a charm of its own.

St. John, on the other hand, although aware of Howard's personal beauty, by no means expects to find in him a dignified and courtly gentleman, grave beyond his years, with a face in which firmness and patient forbearance are equally prominent.

He has pictured a person of unusual height and size, with features like an artist's dream of an Italian bravo. Perhaps Lord Ferrars is to blame. That young nobleman takes his kinsman aside at the earliest opportunity.

"I say, Darrell."

"Say on."

"Do you see anything peculiar about my physiognomy?"

"Yes. An extraordinary resemblance to mahogany in colour and coarseness of grain."

"Oh, bother! Anything else?"

"A certain puffiness, as though somebody had been dancing the double shuffle upon it after considerably removing his boots."

"Well, Mr. Howard did that."

"Danced the double shuffle upon your face? Really, your tutor is a gentleman of extremely versatile talents."

"Don't be so confoundedly exact, Darrell. He did that this morning with the boxing gloves. We had a regular mill, I can tell you."

"But I thought sparring was your strong point—that you were invincible."

"He licked me, at all events," is the somewhat crest-fallen rejoinder. "I will be even with him yet, however. I reckon I can beat him in strength if not in skill."

"Revenge!" cries Darrell, theatrically. "We will have ber-lood! There," relapsing into his ordinary languid manner, "go away, Ferrars. You fatigue me."

"But, Darrell, don't talk about the fray before the women, or there will be a scene. Little Clare is in a frigidal state of effervescence."

"She will have ber-lood too? Why?"

"I will tell you. We boxed in the disused coach-house, and I made up my mind to have some fun with the tutor."

"Secure in your invincibility. Yes."

"I am almost ashamed to tell you I had hard gloves brought for myself and soft ones for him. Not that I meant to knock him about much, but I wished to see what stuff he was made of."

"Noble youth! To put it mildly, did the means strike you as being at all 'cadish'?"

"He spotted the trick, I imagine, and donned the hard ones himself while I was compounding a soothing draught for our mutual refreshment."

"Poetical justice," murmurs St. John, approvingly.

"Then we went at it, hammer and tongs, and I was considerably worsted."

"A moral comedy in one act."

"In two acts. I did something that riled him—spared unfairly, perhaps—for I felt uncommonly wild. He threw off the hard gloves, and—"

"Challenged you to single combat with harder fists?"

"No. He insisted upon an exchange."

"For what reason?"

"That he might bestow the soundest thrashing I ever had in my life, he said."

"Oh, ingenuous tutor."

"And he did too; the fellow fought like a demon. I could not touch him. I believe Tom Sayers was a fool to that man, in science, at all events."

"A more humble professor of the noble art appears to have been a fool to him in any case."

"Finally, he sent me purring against the wall. My head struck it, and I lay stunned for some minutes. When I recovered there was the tutor looking as white as a sheet, and Clare deluging me with cold water and him with feminine invective."

"That sister of yours, Ferrars, would make a model 'Kate' in the 'Taming of the Shrew'."

"Well, I have not seen Mr. Howard since, for Clare carried me off to hold a council of war. We

commenced a series of reprisals by anointing the enemy's easy chair with bird lime, and after dinner, if you keep your eyes open, you may see fun of another kind."

"Has the first plot succeeded?"

Lord Ferrars makes a wry face.

"It appears the tutor carried off the earl for a private confab and politely placed him in the most comfortable seat the room contained. When my lord rose to depart the chair rose also. Now you know the position of affairs, Darrell. Don't tread on dangerous ground at dinner or that little spit-fire, Clare, may explode again."

So St. John Darrell commences a political conversation at dinner, which leads to a general discussion of the Russo-Turkish war.

"There is a terrible fascination for me," says Miss Carew, "in the accounts eye-witnesses gave of the battles. I realise all the details with startling distinctness. The rattle of musketry, the clouds of blue smoke, the roar of cannon, the thunder of horses' hoofs, the mangled bodies, the means of the wounded and the dying."

"Some of those accounts," commences St. John, "describe more accurately the struggles of fifty years ago than modern ones, and suggests the reflection that the writers draw as much upon imagination as yourself."

"I trust the day may soon arrive when the sword shall be turned into the ploughshare and the spear into the pruning-hook," reflects Miss Carew, severely.

"Uncommonly rude implements of husbandry they would make," is the irreverent rejoinder.

"A scriptural quotation is a poor subject for sceptical witticisms, Mr. Darrell."

"Pardon me, madame. I respect prophecy, but not the opinions of those who would have it fulfilled in their own peculiar manner."

"May I ask how Mr. Darrell would fulfil the one in question?"

"It has already come to pass, or nearly so, literally by the substitution of firearms for steel. Now that a sharpshooter can pick off a man at a thousand yards there is little close hand-to-hand fighting. Another invention, or two and there will be none. It is my opinion that before long such frightfully destructive agents will be discovered that war between two civilised nations would mean simply annihilation to both. When that day arrives wars will cease."

"I fear you are materialist, Mr. Darrell."

"I am anything you please, by turns. Materialist, rationalist, Christian, Jew, infidel or Turk."

"Then I wish you were compelled to dress in character," laughs Lady Clare. "You would make an admirable pasha of three tails, rigged out with turban and scimeter, and all the etceteras."

"Bismillah! There is one God, and Mahomet is his prophet," says St. John, gravely.

"Mr. Darrell," cries Mrs. Carew, with pious horror, "if you utter such shocking blasphemy I must leave the table."

"I really beg your pardon. I had no idea you objected to devout quotations, or that you acknowledge the existence of more gods than one," apologises the offender, with bland courtesy.

Mrs. Carew sniffs angrily, and does not deign a reply.

"Have you travelled in the East?" asks Mostyn Howard.

"A little, and I spent three consecutive months at Constantinople."

Lady Clare claps her hands, and Mrs. Carew heaves a despairing sigh, thinking how hopeless it is to cultivate a proper conventional manner in this spoiled child.

"And did you turn Mohammedan, and grow a long beard, and smoke tobacco through rose-water, and drink tiny cups of coffee, and buy a whole lot of wives in the slave-markets?"

"I did," answers St. John, gravely.

"How delightful!" cries Lady Clare.

Mrs. Carew is the picture of severe disapproval.

"I consider it in extremely bad taste," she says, "to jest upon such subjects."

"And I am inclined to agree with Ouida,"

retorts St. John, "when she makes one of her characters say that there are but two things in life worth living for—'a little laughter and a little love.'"

Mrs. Carew grows slightly waspish, and forgets to be polite.

"There is one description of laughter," she says, "which is fitly described as 'the crackling of thorns under a pot.'"

"Who is Ouida?" asks Lady Clare.

"A person whose opinions I must altogether decline to discuss," answers Mrs. Carew.

"A lady with a particularly bad opinion of her sex," laughs St. John.

"The greatest female genius of the day, notwithstanding," says Mostyn Howard.

"Is she a Mohammedan also?" inquires Lord Ferrars.

"I cannot say," replies St. John. "Upon most subjects, human and divine, she appears to have a creed peculiarly her own."

"One article of which, judging from her delineations, must needs agree with Mahomet's dream of the infernal regions, in which he said that the greater number of their inhabitants were women," adds Mostyn Howard.

"Mahomet was a gross sensualist and a hypocritical impostor," remarks Mrs. Carew, slyly. "His doctrines are hardly worth discussing."

"Yet they are held by one hundred and sixty millions of people," says St. John. "I have yet to learn he was a grosser sensualist than the patriarchs, than Devil, or than Solomon. Like them he simply conformed to the habits of the polygamous Eastern nation amongst whom he reared."

"I cannot regard him as a hypocrite," says Mostyn. "The labours of Mohler, Carlyle, Irving and others have very much shaken that view, if they have not entirely dispelled it."

"The man believed in what he taught," urges St. John. "Look at his endurance for twelve years of every species of insult and persecution, his steady resistance of every offer of wealth and power on condition he should desist from his endeavours, the simplicity of his mode of life to the very last."

"But he fabricated the Koran," objects Blanche, "and put it forth as the word of God."

"He certainly dictated revelations in the purest and most graceful Arabic, and as it is impossible the 'illiterate prophet' as he is called in the Koran, a man who could neither read nor write, should be able to compose a book of such excellent doctrine and in so elegant a style, it must be inspired."

Mrs. Carew, with a look of righteous indignation, gives the signal for the ladies to retire, and sails majestically from the room.

The gentlemen sit chatting awhile, until a white-robed figure flitting by the window attracts Lord Ferrars's attention.

"The ladies are in the Dutch garden," he says. "How cool and pleasant it looks. I vote we join them."

So the three younger men, leaving the earl to sip his wine alone, step through the window and saunter round the trim flower beds towards the sheet of ornamental water, in the centre of which is that city of refuge to which Lord Ferrars and Lady Clare were wont to flee in earlier days.

The former is somewhat flushed with wine.

"Look out for squalls," he whispers to St. John. "Presently you will see some fun."

Mrs. Carew is tending over a bed of geraniums, and vouchsafes neither look nor word as St. John passes. Blanche is visible, seated upon the stone coping which surrounds the pond and gazing meditatively into the clear water.

"Are you contemplating suicide, Miss Carew?"

"If I were, it would be somewhat difficult to attain my end in two feet of water."

"Not if your disposition is a determined one. May I ask what thoughts lie in this fish-pond, like truth at the bottom of a well?"

"I was simply enjoying the delicious coolness of the night air and the peculiar hush that comes at eventide."

"An evasion," laughs Darrell. "You were

looking as intently into the sheet of water as though you were an Arabic maiden by an enchanter's pool, watching to see mirrored the people who shall most influence her future life."

"I was merely noting how calm and peaceful are its transparent depths. It is not 'truth' but 'rest' which always seems to me to lie at the bottom of clear water."

"A decidedly suicidal reflection. 'Rest at the bottom,' that is the very thought which lures poor wretches to self-destruction. I should feel it my duty to watch you narrowly, Miss Carew, were not your life too happy and too tranquil to render that picture of 'rest' particularly seductive."

"I trust," says Blanche, musingly, "that however stormy my existence, I should say, with Blair:

"Our time is fixed, and all our days are numbered; How long, how short, we know not; this we know: Duty requires we calmly wait the summons, Nor dare to stir till Heaven shall give permission.

Or with Shakespeare:

"Against self-slaughter
There is a prohibition so divine,
That crosses my weak hand."

A curious smile plays about St. John's lips.

"I believe more in Shakespeare's divine prohibition than in Blair's duty. The great preventives of suicide are the instinct of self-preservation and the dread of shadowy spiritual torments more terrible than those from which we flee."

"Do not talk so," she says, gently. "People are not wicked enough to desire death."

"Is that wicked? I assure the contrary. Indeed, I have grave doubts whether it be wicked to 'shrub off this mortal coil' even. Existence is an unmasked boon to all. To most of us, weighing the good and the evil of it fairly in the balance, life is hardly worth the living. To many it is weighted with so much misery it becomes a fearful curse. Why not put aside such a gift, a gift thrust upon us without the option of refusal?"

"Mr. Darrell," she cries, pitifully, "you distress me beyond measure."

"Nay," he answers, and his voice is low and sweet as a strain of tender music. "In that case I am myself distressed. Please forgive me."

"Surely you do not really believe in your own theories?"

"I believe in little or nothing. It is my unhappy peculiarity to take up always a kind of negative stand, from which I doubt all propositions. As for the theories advanced by myself, I would as readily attack as advocate them, generally."

"But that is not right."

"Que voulez-vous? I cannot grow enthusiastic, and if I did not shock people occasionally I should lose my bad reputation and become respectable. In the atmosphere of society one quickly adopts the axiom of Talleyrand (was it not?) that language is given to conceal our thoughts. It is a lesson one cannot so quickly unlearn in purer air."

"Are you concealing your thoughts now?"

"No; I am too conscious of the purer air. Do not think quite so badly of me, Miss Carew, as my careless words might sometimes lead you to do. There are about three people in the world whom I honour so much I would not fall too low in their estimation, and you are one."

From brow to throat spreads one of those vivid, sudden blushes to which Blanche is subject. Her eyes meet his own frankly and fearlessly, notwithstanding,

"I do not think badly of you, Mr. Darrell; perhaps because you have not tried to make me. Half the pains you take to outrage people's prejudices would gain their good opinion."

He smiles as though amused.

What an acute little observer it is!

"But suppose that opinion is a matter of utter indifference?"

"Can it be?"

"If I know myself, yes."

"Would it not be as well to conciliate—
Oh, look! look! what are Ferrars and Mr. How-
ard doing?"

"Do not be alarmed. It is merely the sequel
to some practical joke."

A violent struggle is taking place within
twelve yards between pupil and tutor.

At the instant St. John addressed Miss Carew,
Mostyn retraced his steps to join her mother
with the view of pouring oil upon troubled
waters, and Lady Clare came up to Lord Fer-
rars, slipping her arm through his.

"Clare," he whispers, a little huskily, "I am
going to duck the tutor."

"How?"

"Tip him over this stone coping into the
water if he comes sufficiently near."

"You are not strong enough, dear."

"Strong? Clare, my limbs are double the
thickness of his. He is my master at boxing; I
own, but I have the pull of him, I reckon, in
strength."

"Pray be careful."

"Oh, it is all right," asserts her brother,
confidently. "What a half-drowned rat he
will look, Clare, if it be neatly done—climbing
up the wall with the water streaming from his
hair."

The mischievous girl begins to enter into the
spirit of the thing.

"I will station myself opposite," she says
"He will come back to chat with you when he
sees you are alone."

The prediction is fulfilled.

Lord Ferrars rests his elbows on the stone
coping and leans over, gazing thoughtfully at
the water. In five minutes Mostyn joins him
and falls into a similar attitude, wondering the
while why Lady Clare, contrary to custom, is
regarding him so attentively.

"A jolly lot of gold-fish in this pond,"
observes Lord Ferrars, "but it will soon be too
dark to see them."

"Very soon," assents Mostyn, absently. His
thoughts are still with that scornful beauty
opposite, who, after scarcely vouchsafing an
unnecessary glance for days, is now capriciously
indulging in a decided stare.

"How long the water retains heat after the
air has lost it," says Lord Ferrars, politely.

The tone and the nature of the remark are
sufficiently unlike his usual "rough and ready"
utterances to excite the tutor's faint surprise.

"Very long."

Lord Ferrars bends a little further, and
dabbles with his hand in the clear water.

"Just feel," he cries. "It is perfectly hot."

Mostyn stoops to do so, but in the very act an
explanation of his pupil's politeness and of Lady
Clare's vigilance flashes upon him.

He grasps the coping firmly with one hand,
and lowers the other with apparent carelessness
but with actual wariness. So that when Lord
Ferrars, with a quick dash, seizes the tutor's
legs with the view of heaving him headlong
into the pond, he finds his own coat-collar and a
portion of his nether attire in the grasp of the
intended victim.

Taken altogether by surprise, and still further
confused by a vigorous shaking, administered
by arms the muscles of which are like bands of
steel, the young nobleman relaxes his hold.

Forthwith he finds himself lifted bodily a
couple of feet, and hurled over the low coping
into the water, where he alights horizontally,
face downward, upon a bed of water-lilies.

A shout of laughter from St. John completes
his discomfiture. Dripping from head to foot
he clammers back again, and for the moment
appears about to attack Mostyn with the utmost
fury. His intention changes, however.

"You shall account for this to-morrow," he
says, in a voice hoarse with suppressed passion,
and with quick steps he passes up the Dutch
garden towards the house to exchange his
sodden garments for dry ones.

CHAPTER XIV.

FACE TO FACE.

"Tis slander,
Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
Out-venoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath
Rides on the pestilential winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world.

CLARA MARKHAM, casting one swift, backward
glance at Lord Ferrars ere she disappears
amongst the trees, sees with satisfaction he
manifests no intention to follow her, but sits
staring open-mouthed and in utter astonishment
at her retreating figure.

Having gained the drive her run slackens to
a quick walk, and the walk becomes a very
sober pace indeed, when excitement has suffi-
ciently abated for her to reflect with what a
storm of curious questions her advent will be
greeted by the housekeeper if she appear at the
Castle in a profuse perspiration and with a com-
plexion the colour of a peony.

But although, ere she has gone a quarter of a
mile along the shady avenue, her aspect is suffi-
ciently cool and composed, her thoughts are still
in a whirl of anger and indignation.

"Light o' love! Light o' love!" she repeats
to herself at intervals, and at each repetition
resentment deepens against the bestower of so
opprobrious an epithet.

She will never forgive him—never. She will
never make up their lovers' quarrel, she will
never speak to him or look at him. She will go
away from the neighbourhood a hundred miles.
No, she will leave Lady Jocelyn's service and stay
at home for awhile, keeping company by turns
with every likely lad in the village, until Reuben
Holt is mad with jealousy, and if that does not
wake him to something desperate, she will end
by marrying that fool of a miller who is always
pestering her with awkward gallantries.

Womanlike, she does not reason. She has
been grossly insulted, and anger burns hotly.
She makes no allowance for the effect of calum-
nious gossip which may have reached Reuben's
ears, gossip apparently corroborated by the
evidence of his own eyes. If a small voice
whispers that she is not blameless, that from
the first she ought to have been more discreet,
that although her sweetheart chose to break
with her weeks before upon insufficient cause
he may naturally feel aggrieved at sight of the
questionable consolation she thinks proper to
accept, that small voice only irritates her the
more. "Light o' love!" forsooth.

The housekeeper, Mrs. Dampwick, uncon-
sciously adds fuel to the flame by questioning her
kindly about Reuben Holt, and tendering
sound motherly counsel to "make it up"
with the young man, whom her flightiness and
aggravating ways are driving to evil courses.

Clara tosses her head and returns a pert reply.
The cup of tea she is drinking in the house-
keeper's room almost chokes her. She cannot
eat more—she thanks Mrs. Dampwick—the
weather is too hot, and she must be going now,
for she promised her mother not to stay long.

Lady Jocelyn's housekeeper expects her back
this day week. She gave leave for a whole week,
the family being at the seaside, but seemed to
think it strange Clara should ask for a holiday so
soon.

Poor Clara! she does not confess, even to her-
self, that in begging this holiday upon some ex-
cellent excuse there lay deep down in her heart
an unacknowledged hope that somewhere she
and Reuben might come face to face, and that a
reconciliation might ensue.

They have come face to face, alas!

"Light-o'-love! Light-o'-love!"

Again and again the unfortunate appellation
recurs to her, and she hardens her heart against
reminiscences of happy bygone days when
Reuben and she strolled through the green lanes
together, talking of that approaching time when
they should be man and wife.

All is at an end between them now she thinks
as she sets her face homeward.

She does not return by the way she came,
although it is the shorter one, but by a longer
and pleasanter path through the fields.

It is not the pleasantness of the path, how-
ever, which recommends it this evening.

In her present frame of mind a garden or a
wilderness would be alike uninteresting. But
she has some vague idea Reuben Holt may way-
lay her to demand an explanation of that scene
in the woods of which he was a treacherous spec-
tator.

And she has resolved never again to speak to
her quondam lover, save under compulsion.

Never again! With every step the resolution
deepens. Vanity and pride are her besetments.
The first has already been deeply wounded, for
her power to influence Reuben's bold spirit
through his affection has proved so little that
the quarrel a word would at first have healed
has become a permanent estrangement.

She refused to speak that word, thinking he
would "come round" without it, and the
breach widened accordingly.

But the torments of piqued vanity are trifling
compared with what she now suffers. The word
Reuben hurled at her shows how she has fallen
in his estimation. In old times he had been
wont to look up to her as one slightly above
himself in education and position. What must
he think of her now?

"Light-o'-love!"

How the insult rankles! She tramples upon
the late clover where it strews the path, and
never thinks how sweet and fragrant it is. She
passes through waving cornfields, growing white
unto the harvest, and never thinks how soon the
wheat will be golden and the reapers busy
amongst the grain.

She will never speak to him again—never!
For the twentieth time she repeats this resolve,
and in doing so rounds a corner, and Reuben
Holt stands before her.

There is a little bridge spanning a brook,
and at the end of the bridge is a wooden stile.

She stands at one end of the bridge, waiting to
cross, and he at the other, leaning over the stile
and scowling at her from under his dark brows.

Her first impulse is to flee. It is dismissed as
cowardly. Her next is to overwhelm him with
reproaches. It is dismissed as undignified. Her
next is to assume cold indifference, and silently
to await the sequel.

She does wait, with that duplicity of feature
which belongs naturally to so many women. Her
air is that of one who contemplates a stranger,
with some slight surprise he should continue to
block the path.

Reuben Holt's smouldering resentment bursts
forth in a meaningless monosyllable, made
savagely expressive by the fury with which it is
uttered.

"Well!" he says.

Clara's reply is a slight grimace and a shrug of
the shoulders. She learnt both the grimace and the
shrub a year ago of Pepito, St. John Darrell's
valet.

Reuben was very jealous of Pepito at the time
and the recollection does not improve his temper.
But Reuben's ideas flow far more swiftly than
words wherewith to express them, and the only
way he can think of to show his indignation is
to repeat the monosyllable in a louder tone.

"Well!" he shouts.

Clara protests against the shout and the form
of salutation. Her protest is mute disregard of
both. She waits silently as before.

Reuben waits also for a few seconds. He has
plenty to say, but words are wanting to com-
mence the interview, and this scornful silence is
not inspiring. He tries a taunt.

"Well! Light-o'-love!"

The taunt is successful. The girl's face flushes
angrily. Between them is a bridge, a long
plank of wood, that is. She walks across it
until they stand face to face with the stile be-
tween.

"Let me pass," she demands.

"No, you don't, my lass. You and me have
got a word or two to say to each other first."

"Then I will go round home t'other way,"
cries Clara, turning to retrace her steps.

Reuben Holt seizes her by the wrist and

draws her close to him again with his strong hand.

"Not so fast, my lass. You don't go till you've answered a question or two."

"If I stand here all night, Reuben Holt, I won't answer one. Leave loose o' my wrist. Leave loose, I tell you! Till you've said your say I'll stand here, because your strength's more nor mine, and I can't help myself, but not another word, good or bad, do you get from me to-night, and so I tell you."

Reuben Holt drops the wrist but keeps a watchful eye upon his prisoner.

"Tain't much as I want to know. It's a straight question as I've got to put, and I'll have a straight answer. I wouldn't ha' put it, not for a mint o' money, but for what I see wi' my own eyes, accidental like, to-day. When a poor gal d' go ramblin' through woods wi' a gentleman, and d' sit cuddlin' on a tree together, it's time for her poor, soft fool of a sweetheart to be as wise as other people."

Wrathful sentences of bitter retort rise to Clara's compressed lips, but do not pass them.

He waits awhile for the reply which does not come, then he continues, as much in sorrow as in anger. Words flow more freely now the ice is broken.

"See what you've druv me to, Clara. Months agone there weren't a steadier lad i' the village, though I says it as shouldn't. Who's got a good word for me now? 'cept loafers an' poachers an' sots, them as I kept at arm's length when my heart was high, afore ye brought it low, my lass?"

His voice trembles; he turns his bloodshot eyes upon her and pauses again.

For a moment the girl is stirred to pity, and her resolve is shaken. A few more words in the same strain and it might fail altogether, but the young man does not divine this, and the remembrance of his wrongs moves him again to anger rather than reproach.

"Long enough ye were playing up your sly gamee afore ever I suspected it. A born flirt I allus knew ye to be, with a ready ear and a pert reply for every fool as was taken wi' your pretty face. But I trusted ye, Clara. I thought it was 'Say what you please, but hands off, my boy,' and the first lad as I heard mix your name up disrespectful with the young lord's got such a thrashin' as laid him up for a week."

The speaker's eyes flash, and his fists clench vengeancefully at the recollection.

Clara's features are schooled to patient indifference; their expression does not vary.

"But there, 'twas the talk o' the village. All the spiteful tongues in the place might wag, but I mustn't say a word to you or there was a row. So we got not to speak at all, and it druv me reckless. D'y'e hear, Clara?—reckless. Curse it all, are ye made of stone, or struck dumb?"

The passionate query evokes no response. One look into the scornful, averted face and Reuben Holt speaks again.

"I could only be recklesser in one thing, and that thing will be done to-night, unless so be as I get a straight answer, and satisfactory, to the straight question I'm going to put."

There is silence still. Clara inwardly determines that the thumb-screw should not drag that answer from her.

"Say 'Yes' and we will be as we were three months ago, only no more kissin' on stairs and cuddlin' on fallen trees, thank you, for Reuben Holt's promised wife. Say 'No' and not a soul shall hear me breathe your name again, or tell the secret, and—Clara—I will try never to think an angry thought. Only one word—'Yes' or 'No.' Wilt speak it?"

She will not, whatever the question, is the girl's thought. The brief penitence which reproach awakened has left her more obdurate than ever. But curiosity is so far excited that her glance comes from vacancy and meets his own.

His eyes look searchingly into hers, as though they would read her soul. His voice sinks to a hoarse whisper.

"Clara, until to-day I gave ye ne'er an ill name, even in thought. Tell me this, for God's

sake, and put me out of my misery. Are ye still an honest girl? Tell me, lass, and I'll believe your simple word afore all the black hearts and lying lips i' the world."

It was to this then that the long prelude tended, to a repetition, in cold blood, of the cruel insult which before raised her indignant anger.

She forgets her resolution to be silent. She would speak now words of scathing bitterness that should burn into his dull, suspicious brain, but for a choking lump in her throat, which swells and swells until it threatens to suffocate her.

One mute reply that insulting query evokes. A rush of hot blood from the proud heart to her cheeks. When it recedes it leaves them pale as death.

And Reuben Holt, noting these signs of emotion, puts his own construction upon them, and turns away, with an execration upon his titled rival and threat of deadly vengeance.

It is a field of barley in which he has been standing. Straight across it, as the crow flies, he goes, in a direction diagonal to the park, beating down the thick stalks in a way that would evoke hearty curses from Farmer Dayzell, to whom it belongs, were his progress observed.

She watches his head and shoulders, all that is visible of him above the luxuriant growth, until they are a speck in the distance.

If a whisper could recall him, she thinks, she would not breathe it. If a look could refute his degrading suspicions, she would turn her face another way.

A strong sense of ill-use and injustice is upon her.

She has permitted Lord Ferrars's free-and-easy attentions to a certain extent, it is true. Gratiated vanity and the instinct of coquetry made it difficult to reject them, but in heart she has been faithful to her lover.

Now and then, elated by an unusually gallant speech from the young nobleman, she has indulged in a romantic dream of a real live lord kneeling at the feet of a village maiden and begging her in impassioned language to become his bride.

But in these dreams she has invariably returned a grateful refusal, and has forthwith sought out Reuben Holt, at first overwhelming him with despair by recounting her brilliant opportunity, and then exalting him to the seventh heaven by the immediate bestowal of her hand.

And this is the reward of fidelity. An imputation against her virtue in the form of a question.

Poor Clara! With a heavy heart, she clammers over the stile. With heavy steps, she threads the footpath between the nodding ears. Ere she is half-way through the field rage is merged in self-pity. Self-pity finds but partial relief in choking sobs and angry tears.

Meanwhile, Reuben has jumped a ditch, has plodded across a field of turnips, has climbed a hedge, and has struck the winding footpath again, half a mile in advance of his late companion.

He has done all this mechanically, striding along as though bodily exertion might afford some slight relief to the tumult and passion of his mind.

Luckily he meets nobody. With his pale face, his bloodshot, staring eyes, his constant mutterings, his clenched fists, his violent gestures, Reuben Holt might be taken for a madman.

In time he reaches a little ale-house, half a mile from the village, and walks into an inner room with the air of an habitué. A woman bustles forward with a cheerful greeting.

Reuben answers it with a scowl and a gruff demand for ale and tobacco.

For quite an hour he sits smoking and drinking. Occasionally he turns to a clock in the corner, an old-fashioned clock, furnished with an hour-hand only, but he manifests no symptoms of impatience. It is a mind unoccupied upon which time hangs heavily. Reuben Holt's mind is full of burning thoughts, of hopeless sorrow, of revengeful cravings.

The hour-hand has crept from seven till nine, and the inner room, shaded always by branches which overhang and occasionally beat against its one window, is filled with twilight dimness. The clock has but just struck, with a loud de-liberation that seems to imply conscientious discharge of the few duties allotted it, when the door of the apartment opens, and a man's head is thrust inquiringly forward, and withdrawn with an exclamation of disappointment. Looking from comparative light into semi-darkness, he fails to descry the silent figure in the corner.

"Come in, dolt," cries Reuben.

"Be'est there, lad?" returns the head, joyfully. "Dang the dark. I couldn't see thee. Mike, t' lad's here."

Mike's heavy steps, stamping along the boarded passage, answer the announcement. His voice is heard shouting to the hostess for pipes and "yale." A demand for lights is rudely negatived by Reuben, and the demand is patiently withdrawn. Very tolerant of the lad's humours the new-comers appear to be, and when he curses the darkness presently and shouts for candles they forbear to twit him with inconsistency, showing politeness worthy a higher rank of society.

Candles are brought, pipes are lighted, foaming tankards are emptied and replenished, and the converse of the elder men is almost monosyllabic. Reuben does not speak at all. Once or twice, when accosted, he gives a moody grunt, which may be taken either for assent or denial, yet no dissatisfaction is evinced by his companions.

They are both by many years his senior. They are both clad in greasy velveteen, much worn and very rusty. They have both a knack of stealing occasional furtive glances at him and at each other, and upon the faces of both there is the indescribable stamp of "vagabond," peculiar to the Ishmaels of civilisation. Here the resemblance ceases.

One is a man of gigantic size and strength, who wears an expression of mingled courage and ferocity, strongly suggestive of his canine prototype, the bull-dog. His swarthy complexion and the colour of curly hair and beard have earned him the sobriquet of "Black Mike."

The other is a slim, wiry little fellow, known to the neighbourhood as "Slippery Sam." If Black Mike be a bull-dog, Slippery Sam is assuredly a fox. He boasts a fair skin, covered with freckles, exceedingly modest hirsute appendages, the colour of carrots, and small, sharp features, instinct with low cunning.

Now and again Black Mike's heavy countenance lowers ever so little, and he glances inquiringly through the smoke wreaths at Slippery Sam, but the serene satisfaction of that worthy's face never changes, and Black Mike's swarthy visage clears again.

It is suffering partial eclipse in a tankard when Reuben Holt starts from a gloomy reverie, springs to his feet, dashes the pipe he has been smoking into the grate, and stretches his hand across the table with a fretful oath.

Black Mike's ideas, ponderous as his body, travel slowly. He looks from the proffered hand to the foxy face opposite for an explanation.

Slippery Sam needs none. He too has risen, and grasps the hand enthusiastically, working it with steady pump-handle action.

"I'll join ye, mates," says Reuben. "Brayvo!" shouts Black Mike, with a string of expletives. "We be a match now for all—"

Slippery Sam's hand abandons the pumping process and covers the speaker's mouth, at a terrible risk of disappearing therein.

"Shut up, wilt? Dost want all i' the house to know?"

Thus rebuked, Black Mike does "shut up," and listens in silence to his comrades' whispered colloquy.

"Dost mind the place, lad?"

"Ay—and the time."

"Wilt be there to-night?"

"Ay."

Slippery Sam produces a washleather purse,

from which he counts a sovereign, two halves,

and a pound's worth of loose silver. He pushes the latter towards Reuben.

"Ther—r—" he remarks. "We be partners, as agreed on, from the beginning o' the week. Three pound were what the last haul brought we from the dealer. Ther's thy snack."

With a contemptuous wave of the hand, Reuben dashes the silver to the floor, seizes his hat, and walks to the door.

He pauses upon the threshold, a look of dogged determination on his features.

"I want no bribe, Slippery Sam. If poaching's thievry, I'm a thief, for I'm with ye from this moment, but 'taint the money as do tempt me."

His footsteps die along the passage as the poachers grope for the scattered coins. When the last is secured, a division effected, and the remaining liquor swallowed, they also leave the house, with light hearts. They know the worth of their new confederate. Black Mike has strength and courage, Slippery Sam has cunning, but Reuben Holt possesses qualities which render him as likely a poacher as ever twisted a snare or baited a night-line.

(To be Continued.)

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

THE LEGEND OF BROMSERHOF.—The castle of Bromserhof, near the middle of the town, was the family residence of the knightly race of Bromser, long since extinct. Tradition says one of these knights, Bromser of Rudesheim, on repairing to Palestine, signalled himself by destroying a dragon, which was the terror of the Christian army. No sooner had he accomplished it than he was taken prisoner by the Saracens, and while languishing in captivity he made a vow that if ever he returned to his castle of Rudesheim he would devote his only daughter Gisela to the church. He arrived at length, a pilgrim, at his castle, and was met by his daughter, now grown into a lovely woman. Gisela loved and was beloved by a young knight from a neighbouring castle, and she heard with consternation her father's vow. Her tears and entreaties could not change his purpose. He threatened her with his curse if she did not obey, and in the midst of a violent storm she precipitated herself from the tower of the castle into the Rhine below. A fisherman found her corpse the next day in the river by the tower of Hatto, and the boatmen and vintagers at this day fancy they sometimes see the pale form of Gisela hovering above the ruined tower, and hear her voice mingling its lamentations with the mournful whistlings of the wind. The Bromserhof is now turned into common dwelling-houses, and the antiquities it contained are partly removed to Johannenberg. They consisted of old furniture, family pictures, etc., together with the chain which bound the knight Johann Bromser while a prisoner in Palestine. The best quality of the famed Rudesheim wine grows upon the terraces overhanging the Rhine, close to Ehrenfels. Charlemagne is said to have ordered vines to be brought hither from Burgundy and Orleans.

THE LADIES' MINSTREL.—In the cathedral of Mayence (where is the tomb of Fastrada, third wife of Charlemagne, A.D. 794) is the tomb of the minstrel or Minnesanger, Frankenlob—“Praise the Ladies”—so called from the complimentary character of his verse. His real name was Heinrich von Meissen. He was a canon of Mayence Cathedral, and so great a favourite of the fair sex that his bier was supported to the grave by eight ladies, who poured over it libations of wine at the same time that they bathed it with their tears. His monument, a plain red tombstone, stands against the wall of the cloisters. It bears his portrait in low relief, copied (1783) from the original, which was destroyed by the carelessness of some workmen.

A more worthy monument was erected in 1843 to the “Ladies' Minstrel” by the ladies of Mayence. In the nave of this cathedral is a red sandstone monument, erected in 1357 to St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany and first archbishop of Mayence. He was an Englishman, and born at Crediton, in Devonshire, of noble and wealthy parents. He became a monk in the Benedictine Abbey of Nutsall, near Winchester, in which, in the beginning of the eighth century, he taught poetry, history, rhetoric, and the Holy Scriptures. His missionary labours—he became archbishop and primate of Germany—lasted more than thirty years, and extended from the Elbe to the Rhine and from the Alps to the ocean.

ANTIQUITIES OF TREVES.—This very ancient city stands on the right bank of the Moselle, in a valley of exuberant richness, surrounded by low vine-clad hills. An inscription on the wall of the Rothen Haus asserts that Treves was built before Rome. Without giving credit to this, it may fairly be considered the oldest city in Germany. Julius Caesar, when he first led the Roman armies into this part of Europe, found Treves (B.C. 58) the flourishing capital of a powerful nation, the Treviri, who, as allies of the Romans, rendered them great assistance in conquering the neighbouring tribes. The emperor Augustus established here a Roman colony, having a senate and magistrates of its own; it was indeed the capital of the Roman Empire north of the Alps. It was in later times often the residence of the Roman emperors. Although almost annihilated during the invasion of the Goths and Huns, it arose to a height of splendour nearly equaling its former state, under the rule of the archbishops of Treves, who were princes and electors of the empire. Many of them seemed to have aimed more at temporal than spiritual sway. They maintained large armies, which, after the fashion of the times, they did not scruple to lead in person, clad in armour. The ambition and talents of many of these episcopal rulers increased their dominion so much as to obtain for them considerable political influence in Germany. At the French Revolution it suffered the usual fortune of having its churches and convents stripped of their wealth and the buildings turned into stables or warehouses. No other city of Germany or Northern Europe possesses such extensive Roman remains. The palace of the electors and bishops is now a barrack; close to it are the remains of the Basilica, or imperial hall, of gigantic proportions. Great interest attaches to these old walls, if we consider them as the favourite residence of Constantine, and that out of them issued the decrees which governed at the same time Rome, Constantinople, and Britain. There are the remains of the Roman Amphitheatre, capable of holding about six thousand persons. Here Constantine entertained his subjects with a spectacle which he called Frankish Sports, and which consisted in exposing many thousand unarmed Frankish prisoners to be torn in pieces by wild beasts (in 306 and again in 313 A.D.)! So great was the number of victims that the savage beasts desisted from their own accord from the work of destruction. Those who survived were made to fight as gladiators against one another; but they are said to have spoilt the amusement of the hard-hearted spectators by voluntarily falling on each other's swords, instead of contending for life. The Roman bridge over the Moselle, mentioned by Tacitus, was blown up by the French during the wars of Louis XIV.

THE COUNTESS AND THE ARCHBISHOP.—The castle of Grafinburg was one of the strongest between Treves and Coblenz, commanding entirely the passage of the Moselle. It was the family residence of the noble counts of Sponheim, and was built in the fourteenth century (1338) with an archbishop's ransom. A long and deadly feud had existed between the archbishops of Treves and the counts of Sponheim, when, in 1325, the death of Count Henry held out to the reigning archbishop, Baldwin, the prospect of enriching himself at the expense of the widowed countess; taking advantage, therefore, of her unprotected position, he made in-

roads into her domain, plundering her subjects and laying waste her lands. The Countess Loretta, however, was gifted with a manly spirit, and was not a person to submit tamely to such insults and injury; so, calling together her vassals, she boldly expelled the intruders with loss and disgrace—equally to the surprise and indignation of Baldwin, who little expected such opposition from a female. The very same year, as the bishop was quietly and unsuspectingly sailing down the Moselle to Coblenz, with a small retinue, his barge was suddenly arrested, nearly abreast of the Castle of Starkenburg, by a chain stretched across the river below the surface, and before he had time to recover from his surprise armed boats put off from the shore, and he was led a prisoner into the castle of the countess. She treated her persecutor with courtesy, but kept him fast within her walls until he agreed to abandon a fort which he had begun to build on her territory, and paid down a large ransom.

WEDDING PIN LORN.—Among the superstitions about pins is that the bride, in removing her bridal robe and chaplet at the completion of the marriage ceremony, must take especial care to throw away every pin worn on this eventful day. Evil fortune, it is affirmed, will sooner or later inevitably overtake the bride who keeps even one pin used in the marriage toilet. Woe also to the bridesmaids if they retain any of them, as their chances of marriage will thereby be materially lessened, and anyhow they must give up all hope of being married before the following Whitsuntide. On the other hand, in some parts of England, a bride, on her return home from church, is often at once robbed of all the pins about her dress by her single friends present, from the belief that whoever possesses one of them will be married in the course of a year. Much excitement and amusement is caused, and the bride herself is often the victim of rough treatment from the youthful competitors for this supposed charm.

CHANGES IN THE FROG.—Nowhere in the animal kingdom is there so favourable an opportunity for peeping into nature's workshop as in the metamorphoses of the frog. This animal is a worm when it comes from the egg, and remains such the first four days of its life, having neither eyes, ears, nostrils, nor respiratory organs. It crawls; it breathes through its skin. After a while a neck is grooved into the flesh; its soft lips are hardened into a horny beak; the different organs, one after another, bud out; then a pair of branching gills, and, last, a long limber tail. The worm has become a fish. Three or four days more elapse, and the gills sink back into the body, while in their places others come, more complex, arranged in vascular tufts, one hundred and twelve in each. But they, too, have their day, and are absorbed—together with their framework of bone and cartilage—to be succeeded by an entirely different breathing apparatus, the initial of a second correlated group of radical change. Lungs are developed, the mouth is widened, the horny beak is converted into rows of teeth, the stomach, the abdomen and the intestines are prepared for the reception of animal food in place of vegetable. Four limbs, fully equipped with hip and shoulder bones, nerves and blood-vessels, push out through the skin, while the tail, being now supplanted by them as a means of locomotion, is carried away piece-meal by the absorbents, and the animal passes the rest of its days as an air-breathing and flesh-feeding batrachian.

THE WRESTLING BARONET.—("Derby Mercury," April 9, 1742).—Last week dy'd at his seat at Bunny, in Nottinghamshire, Sir Thomas Parkyns, Bart., well known by the athletic part of the world for having been the author of a book to teach the Art of Wrestling; and he was buried under a monument, which he erected many years ago, whereon is placed his statue in a wrestling posture with Time.

Here, thrown by Time, old Parkyns laid,
The first fair fall he ever had.
Nor Time, without the aid of Death,
Coud e'er have put him out of breath;
Ali else he threw, and will those twain
As soon as he gets up again.

OLD ENGLISH HOSPITALITY.—The "Derby Mercury" of Feb. 25, 1742, has the following paragraph:—On Sunday last died Sir Richard Ellis, of Nocton, in Lincolnshire, baronet, who formerly represented the borough of Grantham in two parliaments and of Boston in three. There is one thing very remarkable in this family. The last Sir William kept open house every day in the week for all comers, and had constantly twelve dishes dressed every day for their entertainment, and the same table was constantly kept up whether anybody came or no; and the late Sir Richard allowed £300 per annum to a steward and his wife, who resided at the fine Mansion House at Nocton, to keep up this old English hospitality, and this is reckoned the last family in England that kept open house to anybody that came.

IN THREE ACTS.

ACT II.

We must now go back for an hour or so in our story.

The old actor had laid his hand on the arm of the stranger who had come to see him and was leading him away, but to his intense astonishment before they had taken three steps the stranger stopped short, regarded him in his character as Mephistopheles from head to foot, and burst into a loud explosion of laughter.

"I—I beg your pardon," said he, as soon as he could speak, "but you are such an uncomely droll figure, close to!"

"I daresay I am," replied the other, calmly.

"You see I never was behind the scenes in a theatre in my life till now," continued the other, in an apologetic tone, "and it's all so very funny—the dresses, and the paint and the rest of it."

The complexion of the speaker was roughened, like that of a person who has lived out of doors in all weathers. But just then lifting his hat to pass his hand through his thick, short blonde curls, he showed a smooth, white forehead, and indeed the whole face appeared young from the expression of mingled hopefulness and determination which animated it.

The stranger was tall, full-chested and free of movement, having something of the grace of a wild animal. He was evidently unused to confinement.

The old actor regarded him with a smile of approval and remarked:

"You say you have something to tell me. Come this way."

He laid his hand on his companion's arm and led him off down the mysterious recesses of the stage till they reached an empty dressing-room.

"Now then," he continued, "I've ten minutes to give you."

"Which means stave ahead. Well, so I will."

"I suppose you are quite sure I'm the person you wanted?" asked the old actor.

"Yes, if you are Christopher North. But stay, the acquaintance mustn't be all on one side. My name is Derick, Hiram Derick. Now we know each other, and it's all plain sailing," and he shook Christopher's hand cordially as he spoke.

"Important you said the matter was," said the old actor, coming back to business.

"One hundred thousand pounds, and a good bit of it bringing in ten per cent, not a penny less. That's what the old man has left her."

"Left her? Left who?"

"Who? Why, Miss Columbine to be sure—I mean Meredith."

He put his two hands on the old actor's shoulders as he spoke, pushed him a little back so as to look comfortably in his face, and stood enjoying the astonishment which he had caused, and which seemed to increase every moment.

For the old actor stared with eyes and mouth wide open, speechless.

"One—hundred—thousand—pounds!" repeated Derick.

The magnitude of the sum seemed at last to dissipate Christopher's bewilderment. He stepped further back, shook his head, and observed:

"There is some mistake, Mr. Derick. The Miss Meredith you are in search of is not my—is not the young lady who plays Columbine in this theatre."

"Now don't you bet on that card, because if you do you'll lose it," returned Derick, cheerfully. "You'll find this little business will pay out pure gold, sixteen to the ounce. No mistake whatever. This is precisely the senorita that is wanted. I've got all the documents safe in here," and he slapped the breast of his coat. "He was her uncle—no jamboree there!"

"I assure you that you have made some mistake," interrupted the old actor. "My—our Rita here hasn't a relation in the world—she has told me so. Why, I've known her since she was so high—"

"I know you have," broke in Derick, interrupting in his turn, "and been father and mother and everything else to her, fed her when she was hungry, tended her when the fever nipped her, helped her to what education she's had time to get, and—and—you're a trump—you're a whole hand of trumps, by the Lord Harry!"

"Nonsense. That's nothing to do with the matter," exclaimed the other, almost peevishly, and looking shame-faced. "Anyhow, I don't see how you can know—"

"But I do. You're found out, partner—exposed you are," continued Derick, in the same tone of enjoyment. "I've been sitting in your drum for a good hour; had a long talk with the old lady that keeps your lodgings, and Miss Meredith's too; and a neat, outspoken body the old woman is. As a reward for all her story I told her what my business is, and hang me if the venerable party wasn't as pleased as if I'd brought her fortune for herself. Why she's a credit to human nature, that is what your Mrs. Wooster is!"

"But I tell you there's a mistake," said the other, growing impatient of his new friend's pertinacity. It was exasperating to hear him dwell on this money when he, Christopher, knew very well that whatever other Rita Meredith might be its rightful possessor, it certainly would not turn out to be his poor little girl. "Not a relation has she; her mother had a brother, a worthless fellow too, I found out, but he died somewhere in America about the time Rita was born."

"Jack Mason! You see I know his name. Well, he didn't die. He went to Australia. He'd been mixed up in a bad business, though he wasn't to blame, and he found this country too hot to hold him. I've known him for fifteen years, ever since I ran away from my old crab of a step-mother. Yes, sir, I was with him in Australia, in California, and I have to thank him that I am a rich man to-day. I was with him when he died a few weeks ago, and a better fellow never lived."

"But are you sure Rita is his niece?"

"Just call that settled. He found it out about a year ago—saw her name in a paper. You and she were playing in some popular piece about that time. I thought so. Just so. The old man made inquiries and found he was on the right track—his niece sure enough. Well, sir, about that time he got hold of the evidence that proved he was innocent—in the forgery, you know?"

"Yes, yes. But why didn't he write or send—"

"Wait, wait! We had to start for Australia to follow up the clue. He did write and sent money. Yes, of course, it never came, I know. Well, we got back to California about three months ago. Old Jack was ailing, had been for some time; he got worse in 'Frisco and worse. But he would not send to his niece; he was always meaning to get better and come on here. Well, sir, I buried him a month ago—the best friend ever a fellow had too."

He stopped speaking, and his face worked a little.

"I suppose you haven't a chew of tobacco anywhere about you?" he asked, presently, his voice quite calm again.

The old actor shook his head—very confused and addled his head felt too—but he was convinced at length. Mr. Derick had made no mistake.

"All on for the next scene," shouted the chronically hoarse voice of the call-boy. "All on for—where is old Cris?"

"I must go. You can watch from the wing, if you like. This way; I'll see you later," said Christopher, and hurried off.

Mr. Derick did stand and watch the performance and enjoyed it hugely, till once when Columbine passed him and stood waiting for her cue to go on the stage he saw her cry and heard the stage-manager ask her with an oath what she meant by it.

After witnessing this little incident Mr. Derick laughed no more. Indeed a hasty movement which he made forward when he saw the brute give the poor girl a push proved that it was as well for somebody's bones that the manager disappeared immediately.

At the end of the act the old actor found Mr. Derick again, and they conversed during a few moments, arranged an interview for the following morning, and then Cris was about to leave him again when he said, pointing to the box:

"Do tell me who that is? I saw her when I first came into the theatre. I've seen handsome women in my time, but never one like this."

"The Princess Olga Daniski."

"Whew! Well, she looks a princess every inch, doesn't she?"

"I should think it probable."

"What the deuce is she doing over here, do you suppose?" exclaimed Derick.

"Strayed over out of curiosity doubtless—princesses sometimes take odd freaks."

"Is one of those chaps her husband?"

"Oh, no. She killed him years ago."

"Killed? Good gracious! you don't mean to say she's a murderer?"

"A dozen times over—but not according to law," said the other, in a matter-of-fact tone. "As for her husband she forced him into fighting a duel with the deadliest shot in Australia. That's the way she freed herself from him when he happened to be in her way."

"Caramba! She looks ugly enough now you have told me that," cried Derick, with a shudder of disgust.

"Ah, you have sharp eyes. You see the stain of blood on her forehead. Others don't," replied his companion, composedly. "But, excuse me, I must go now."

"To-morrow morning at eleven then?"

"Yes—it's Sunday—so we are free! I shall have time to prepare Rita. Good night."

So they separated, counting confidently on the morrow as men do. Ah, that morrow!

"I should have forgotten my errand if it hadn't been for his question," thought Christopher. "I'm wanted in the next scene, but after that, if she's alone, I'll make my visit—ah, my little Rita, my poor little Rita. And if all this fine fortune comes too late—most things do?"

When Christopher was free again he peered out and saw the Pole alone in her box, leaning idly back, not even glancing towards the stage. The loveliness of the scenic effects could not touch, the wit of the dialogue could not amuse her. Weariness, satiety—that was the woman's curse!

Common emotions could not reach her. Sometimes in Spain she could find a moment's interest in watching the arena, when bull and matador both chance to be murdered; but the ordinary attractions of the theatre were as dull as the ordinary loves and hates of real life, which she used merely to kill time.

She heard the door of her box open softly. No wild animal in a jungle ever had ears more quick. She turned her head. In the entrance stood Christopher. He had taken off the false forehead and nose of Mephistopheles, and

cleaned his face somewhat of the paint, but he was still hideously ugly.

This very ugliness attracted the woman.

"I did not believe any human creature could be so hideous," she exclaimed, turning idly towards him. "And you are not painted? No, paint could never accomplish that!" Then she glanced at his costume. "Why, you are the person who plays Mephistopheles in the extravaganza! In the name of all that is diabolical, why did you hide your face? Man, if you will sit for the portrait, I'll have it taken and pay you any price for your trouble. I've three minds to hire you. But I suppose you would not take a place as a servant?"

"I was your servant once for a little. At least I served you, so you said," returned the other, quietly.

"It seems to me I recognise the voice," she exclaimed. "But surely I could not have forgotten that face if I had ever seen it?" Then she seemed all at once to realise the intrusion, and said, insolently: "What do you want here, you fellow?"

"I served you once," continued the other, perfectly unmoved, "and you said you would never forget it."

"Ah! So, whatever it was, in whatever way, you have come now to beg on the strength of it! Of course I paid you at the time, if there ever was any time, when you did me a service."

"Yes! I have come to ask a favour of you, princess—a little one."

"Did me a service? I believe you are an imposter."

"It was fifteen years ago at a masked ball in Naples—in the San Carlo theatre," he answered.

"Ha!" she said, as if some terrible memory stirred her; and she looked more closely at her visitor.

"You were nineteen then," said the other; "you scarcely look a day older—but you are more beautiful, if that is possible."

He spoke as if the words were wrung from him.

"I can't remember you," she said, slowly, still studying his countenance as if she tried to recollect.

"I wore a mask. You did not see my face."

"But I can't remember what you did."

"It was such a trifle. Nearly killed a man and got a letter for you out of his pocket," said the other, in the same quiet voice.

"Ah! I begin to recollect."

"I was crazy with drink and opium, for an awful curse had fallen on me, and I went quite mad for awhile. I was going past your box when I heard loud voices and stopped. The door was partly open. You were on your knees at a man's feet; he was threatening you. Then he flung you off and went out without noticing me. You partly fainted. I picked you up. You told me he was a villain. The letter—you must have the letter! Will you kiss me if I get it? I asked, and—"

"I said yes."

"So I followed him out through a dark side passage, knocked him down senseless, and rifled his pockets—"

"Landinelli!" she broke in. "Hadn't thought of him for centuries! Well, man, I kissed you, so I paid my debt then and there. I don't see that we have anything more to say to each other."

And she turned to look again at the stage.

"Listen to me, I beg," he said, deprecatingly. "I came to ask a favour—to pray you to do a kindness—"

"If it is to a man—no! If a woman, and merely money—yes."

"To a woman—but not money."

"Then I refuse," she replied, carelessly. "Now about sitting for your portrait? Why, your face is a miracle of ugliness," and she laughed contemptuously. "Did ever any woman love you? Is this your native country?"

Her words stung like a whip. But he answered:

"Yea. I was born here. I was young when I saw you in Naples—only twenty-four. I had a voice so beautiful they thought it could

even make people forget my looks, so I went to Italy to study. Just as I was ready to appear on the stage my voice left me—noting but the ugly face remained."

She laughed aloud.

"I suppose you suffered—oh, how you must have suffered—do yet, of course!"

"Was it irony or pity that she spoke?

"No," said the other, "I haven't time. It was so long ago too, I never think of it any more than you do of Landinelli."

Did she wince, or was it only his imagination? She opened and shut her fan.

"Never mind Landinelli. We will come back to the portrait. I know a young artist who will paint it admirably."

"Rudolf da Conti?"

"Yes. How did you know? Is it a bargain?"

"I will do it if you will agree to what I ask."

"Well? Tell your story."

She moved to a chair at the back of the box as she spoke.

"Tell your story," she repeated, drooping her eyelids till the orbs were half hidden, and the pupils blazed like diamond sparks, dilating, contracting as a snake's do while she looked at him.

But the old actor returned her gaze unflinchingly.

"Why, he is ice, this creature," she said to herself. "Any other man would be magnetised or have to run away."

There was not only interest but a certain respect in her countenance, though her voice kept its ring of contempt as she said:

"If you are long or very tedious I warn you I shall show you the door. Now then, be dramatic if you can, and terse and brief."

"I have to begin with Rudolf da Conti."

"I have begun with Rudolf," with a light laugh, "and I have not finished yet. Let him alone."

Her tones sank to their sweetest cadence. Oh, if a white, slumberous, Eastern poison flower had a voice it would sound as hers did when she uttered Rudolf's name.

"He is only twenty-two," cried the other, in pleading accents.

"Only twenty-two!" she echoed. "Since you must talk of him I'll help. He is a genius, a great genius of a certain sort. Do you know about the one real French poet?"

"Alfred de Musset—yes."

"Well, Rudolf is like him. He is a painter into the bargain."

"So was Del Sarto, and he loved Lucrezia," exclaimed the other, dwelling on the name of the woman who has made herself infamous for all time by accomplishing her husband's ruin, and dwelling on it with a tone of scorn which rendered the mention of her a personal reproach to the sorceress before him.

"Right—you have touched my thought!" Her eyes were wide open, blazing, yet magically soft; scarlet roses blossomed on a sudden in her cheeks; all her witchery of beauty and grace burst forth till the usual loveliness of her face would have seemed but a premonition of its splendour new. "Well for Lucrezia that they delayed so long in sending me. De Musset lived and died too soon—he should have waited till I came. But our Rudolf—my Rudolf!"

"Hers, you mean," retorted the other, with a quick wrath in his voice. "You have stolen him—you don't want him—give him back!"

"To whom?"

"To Rita, the Columbine on the stage there—"

She broke in with a scornful laugh.

"Oh! I see it all. You love Rita. Fool, go your way—leave Rudolf to me!"

"I can't," he groaned. "I was tempted to—I waited—I said—oh, you shall see how vile I was!—I said, 'She may learn to care for me when she sees that Rudolf is not worth her love, since its might cannot keep him!' But it was stronger than I—so I had to come!"

"It—what?"

"The power of Good," he answered. She looked at him with a certain surprise, as

a person might who catches the accents of a language that has been so long unheard that though they sound familiar all meaning of the words is lost."

"You would not miss him. You might let him go!" pursued the old actor, with an odd, childlike pleading in his hoarse tones. "What is one more or less to you?"

Her light, scornful laugh was almost fiendish.

"My good fellow, go away. I have driven Rudolf wild. I have sent him down to purgatory. Now I must lift him out of it for a season—isn't that only fair?" with another scornful laugh. "After that your Columbine may have him—have the dull clay, I mean." She waved her fan, as if dismissing him and the whole subject.

"Is your heart a stone?" he said.

Her laugh was now more contemptuous than ever.

"Have done with this nonsense," she cried. "This Mr. Rudolf belongs to the order of men who ought to die young; one cannot fancy him thirty. Listen! In poetry he can never surpass the verses he recited before my friends the other night. Nobody ever described me in such inspired words. He has painted my portrait. It is a portrait, for he painted with his soul. It has made him famous. I'll not have him live long enough to make another woman's face his masterpiece. Why, he has known me three whole months, and lived more in that time than he could in a common life. I've done him, and am doing him, a service. Don't plead for him!"

"I am pleading for her," the other answered, "not for him. I suppose most people would call me a fool. But they were so happy! He had known her nearly two years. Both were poor, but oh, so happy! He is half Italian, and you know what that means. He loves her. In spite of all he loves her. You have driven him mad, but he loves her!"

"I like this," she cried. "Ah! if you could act on the stage as you do here."

"I'm not acting. I'm letting my heart talk."

"Let it talk, let it; I enjoy listening. This is quite a comedy."

"They were to have been married very soon. Oh, it isn't too late yet if you would only let him alone."

He stopped short, actually appalled by the cold ferocity of her smile.

"Go on," she said, impatiently, "go on! Plead—tell me more about them both. I may yield—who knows—I may yield!"

He made a quick step towards her, then drew back, his eyes dangerous with a sombre fire, she gazing fixedly at him all the while.

"Do you know what I ought to do?" he whispered. "Kill you—kill you!"

"Bah! Don't make me think you a coward," she sneered.

"Yes, kill you. What's my life? It's not the idea of losing life that holds me back."

So awful a look came into his face that a quick tremor ran through the woman's frame. But her gaze never stirred from his. The mocking smile was on her lips still.

"This is the reason I can't kill you," he went on, drawing nearer. "If I killed you Rudolf would think you an angel and mourn for you, and so you would do as much harm dead as living."

"Ah! that is it, is it?"

"You are a fiend. There is nothing more that I can say to you. I was a fool to come!"

"Perhaps you were a fool, perhaps not. If you give up this nonsense and want money you can have it. Consent to have your picture taken, and you shall earn more than you can in a year's folly on the stage yonder. Why, a face like yours, as I told you before, is a miracle. If you refuse, if you dare so much as to hesitate, I will punish Columbine—Rita—whatever her name may be, if name she has—for your contumacy."

She stopped and eyed him with a cruel laugh. The start and shudder which he could not control assured her that her threat had struck home.



[FAIR AND CRUEL.]

She took no pains either to hide her satisfaction at having conquered. No matter how great or little the stake, how lofty or unimportant the antagonist, obtaining the victory was essential to her.

"And there are people, wise men they think themselves, who pretend to disbelieve in the existence of evil spirits," exclaimed the old actor, bluntly, not making the slightest effort to conceal his disgust and horror.

"I could answer you, only I'm not in the mood to give you a lecture on theology," said she, smiling contemptuously. "You may go away now. To-morrow afternoon at two o'clock you will be at my house ready to take your first sitting, else—it will be Columbine down yonder who will pay the penalty."

He moved to leave the box, stopped, and was about to speak. But movement and words were checked as suddenly as if he had been struck dumb, for on the instant, first from one throat, then from a score, then from a thousand, arose the awful cry:

"Fire! Fire!"

Before the first terrified echo ceased the vast house, on that side at least, was wrapped in a pall of smoke, lighted by fantastic shapes of flames, that shot up and disappeared, and whose glare rendered visible the maddened crowd, rushing, trampling, furious, desperate, with no show of humanity left, save in the ability to be the fiercer brutes. Brother trod on brother, then on women even. To escape, to be saved, this was the sole thought in any mind—to be saved, though all the others, scores and scores of mortals, perished.

Fire! Fire! Above. Below. On every side. Curling, hissing, swooping, spreading. The stage on that side a wall of flame. The painted dome a circling whirlpool. Fire! Fire! Fire!

It burst from every chink and crevice; it roared, it raged in fiendish eagerness to snatches its prey. It stretched forth its countless arms; it waved its numberless tongues, a myriad-handed

demon, animated by one will—to seize—scathe—destroy.

And in all this blind, mad throng none was now more frenzied than the old actor's companion.

A moment's mute, fascinated horror, in which she was neither able to comprehend nor stir as she leaned over the front of the box, staring out at the blinded sufferers and at the rushing, billowing ocean of flame, which sucked up victims at every breath. Then, turning, she cried to her companion:

"Save me! Save me!"

But her companion was gone. She heard the door of the box slam to and the echo of his voice as he fled. He had forgotten her existence even. Only one thought was possible to him in that crisis. Only one word was on his lips. She heard that word as the door closed.

"Rita! Rita!"

And it rang out like a signal call over all the roar of the conflagration.

The hapless woman turned to flee, fell upon the floor, raised herself feebly, reached the narrow passage, fell again, saw the door which opened at the side of the stage, but was now too paralysed by fear to move it. No flames were yet visible in that spot, only a dull, red glare, a quivering arch of smoke, a heat intolerable. Safety offered that way, perhaps. She tried to rise, and heard her own name shrieked from behind.

"Olga! Olga!"

She was lifted up, held tight in arms made strong as death by despair, and Rudolf's face pressed close to hers.

"Save me!" she shrieked. "Save me! I'm afraid of nothing else. But the fire—the fire! I was to die so—it was prophesied. Don't let me die, Rudolf—don't let me die."

"You shall not—you shall not!"

"I love you, Rudolf. I would not own it before, but I do now. I will marry you if you save me. Great God, save me!"

"You are saved," he answered. "See, this way. Only say the words again."

"I love you, Rudolf. I love you!"

He bore her on, through the door, down the steps. But before he could traverse the space beyond the planks heaved up directly in front like waves. The nearest boards yielded. The flames shot up through the opening, almost scorching the faces of the pair.

"You will let me die, after all," she groaned.

Then a voice, from beyond the gulf of fire, cried:

"Rudolf! Rudolf! See. This is iron. Catch it, quick—quick!"

There stood Columbine. She had dragged forward an iron ladder; she shoved it out across the gulf.

Rudolf seized the nearest round. The girl's hold slipped, the end she grasped was sinking. With a superhuman effort Rudolf raised the ladder and drew it down upon the still solid boards.

But in descending it struck Columbine and she fell—down—down.

Fell, unseen by Rudolf. He had not so much as noticed who it was that offered the means of escape. He had caught up Olga; it was of her only he thought.

But as he raised her in his arms she saw Columbine sink.

"Save me! Save me!" the sorceress moaned; she had not a word for poor Columbine.

In another instant Rudolf had borne his burden across the blazing chasm.

But the planks, which had upheld their bridge, yielded on either side, and went down with a crash, and a volcano of fire surged up behind the pair.

Then there was a rush of cool, fresh air; an open doorway in front; they were without; they were saved.

Saved. Rudolf had borne the enchantress above the body of the woman who loved him; and he had not even known at what cost he had won her life and his.

(To be Continued.)



[PAINFUL INTELLIGENCE.]

FROM HER OWN LIPS. (A COMPLETE STORY).

CHAPTER I.

ONLY A TRAM CONDUCTOR.

Standing alone at the window, I watch the crowd of people, And study as they pass me the warp and woof of life; Woven with good and evil, with sorrow and rejoicing, With peace and true affection, with agony and strife.

Not exactly from the window, as the poet has it, but from every point where humanity can be studied, I like to watch men and things, and it was in a tram car that I first met the man to whom the story I have to tell pertains. I am what the world calls an idle man, that is I have no daily business to take me whirling to the city of a morning, and give me neither time nor inclination for anything but the routine of office life.

I know myself that I am not idle, and that I find occupation for every hour of the twenty-four that is not spent in sleep, and perhaps my modest income and my bachelor home, presided over by my sister, ensure me more happiness than the fine fortunes and the splendid houses of some of my city acquaintances.

I was a city man myself once, and I did not always look to spend my days in a little suburban villa. There was a time when I was preparing for a far different life, and furnishing a house for my Maggie, who was the daughter of the senior partner of the firm I was with.

It was a good match for me, for her father was rich, and to be connected with him meant getting rich too, with attention to business and steadiness, and both these qualities Mr. Duncan—that was Maggie's father—was good enough to say I possessed in no small degree. He told

me he would rather give his girl to me than see her married to the greatest lord in the land; but I never had her.

Everything was ready for our wedding—even the dress was made and sent home—when Maggie was killed. I don't know how I speak of it even now, though it is thirty years ago, and forgotten I think by everyone but me. Her brother was driving her in a little trap, fast too light a thing to take into the crowded city, and just in front of the Bank, in sight of her father's offices, the horse stumbled.

No one knew how it happened, but Maggie was thrown out right under the wheels of a passing omnibus. They went over her and she was taken up dead. There was no blame to be attached to the driver, the man could not help it.

Young Mr. Duncan had no business where he was, and it was a mercy that in trying to veer round the omnibus was not upset and more lives lost.

Poor Jack Duncan! He went mad and never did anything afterwards. He died in confinement somewhere. I saw it from the office window—saw my darling under the feet of those cruel horses. I don't know what happened to me then, nor from that time till many days afterwards, when they told me I had had a fever.

I got up from that illness a weak, wasted creature, with no life in me as it seemed; but Heaven does not take us when we wish to die, and I had to live. My hair was white when I came back into the world, though I was only twenty-seven years old, and I was fit for nothing, and thought I should never be fit for anything again, so my good sister and myself having a little money between us came together and made a home, and a very comfortable home it is.

I am rambling on as if this was my story, and all the while I only meant to introduce myself as it were and explain how I came to meet the man I grew so interested in as the days wore on.

My house is out of London—on Brixton Rise—just above where the trams stop, and we make

great use of them, my sister and myself. We are old people and dislike the scrambling in and out of omnibuses. I don't ride outside either. I am an old fogey now, and leave that to the young fellows who wear ulsters and make themselves look for all the world like Carmelite Friars with their hoods and their belts.

I like the corner seat in a tram when I can get it, and I mostly do get it, living so near the starting point. They change the men very often do the tramway company, as they change their fares and their trams and everything belonging to them. They never seem to know their own minds for long together.

I don't like it, I don't like new faces, and it isn't comfortable when you have come to know a man and are accustomed to him and his civil ways to find some morning that he is gone, no one knows where, and that a blustering, sharp, snappish animal is put into his place, or a booby, who does not know anything about the road or the customers or anything else except his pay.

I had been laid up with a cold for a few days and went out to go to town one morning by the car I generally used, when I found the conductor changed. We had had a sharp little fellow on, rather saucy and thinking a great deal of himself, but attentive and civil enough, and I had got accustomed to him and he to me.

In his place there had come a man whose face struck me at once as having something in it different from the common run of men in his station in life.

He was a gentleman, I could have sworn it—a man reared in comfort if not in luxury, and bearing the traces of careful rearing in every look and gesture. He said nothing, nor did anything that other conductors did not do, but it was his bearing that struck me so particularly.

He was not new to his work, that was very evident, from the way in which he went about collecting the fares and punching the tickets, for it was before the days of the one-horse trams and the boxes and bells.

He was a practised hand, and ran up and

down the dangerous iron ladder to the roof as if it was a broad flight of stairs. I don't know what made me take such an interest in him, but I did. There was something in his face that I could not get out of my head, and I caught myself thinking of him long after I had left the tram.

He was very handsome, but it was not that. I had seen men as handsome in far more menial situations, but there was a curious expression in his eyes that puzzled me.

He had very beautiful eyes, something like the eyes that I had loved so in the years gone by, and perhaps that was what made me notice them. They were soft and brown, like fawn's, and there had been a look of expectancy in them once or twice that was almost painful.

The car had been very crowded, and he seemed to be looking for someone. I saw him scan every face with a strange expression of interest and something that looked to me very like fear.

I chose to go back by the same car—I waited for it—I wanted to see the man again, and he was there. Again the vehicle was full, but I got into the corner by good luck and leaned back, for I was very tired.

When the conductor came round for his fares I had an opportunity of observing him closely, and I liked his appearance even more than at first. A gentleman, I am sure, or one who had been one sometime.

His hands were carefully kept, in spite of the work about the horses, and his clothes, though poor, were neat and well put on. He recognized me and said, quietly:

"Good evening, sir."

"Good evening," I replied. "I am going back with you, you see."

Susan, that's my sister, says that I talk too much to all sorts of people. She stands rather on her dignity, though she is a worthy soul. We come of gentle people, she says, and should hold ourselves aloof from those beneath us in station.

It's all very true, I daresay, but if Susan went out as much as I do she would find keeping aloof from people in these levelling days very difficult, and besides I like to talk sometimes. Intercourse with our fellow creatures does one no harm.

I had my paper, and hardly noticed how we got along. The ride was a long one till we reached Acre Lane, and there the last passenger besides myself got out and the conductor and I had the car all to ourselves. The sound of his voice made me look up from my *Globe*, and I saw him standing in the car. He was looking at the opposite seat to where I sat with such a piteous expression of entreaty and agony on his face as I shall never forget.

He was talking too. I am sure I heard him say "My darling," and something else that I could not catch. It was very odd, and I did not speak for a minute. He seemed to have quite forgotten that there was anyone in the car besides himself, and to be far away in some dream or other of his own.

"Anything the matter, my lad?" I said, after I had watched him for a moment; and he seemed to wake up with a start almost as if he had been asleep.

"No, sir, thank you. I thought—"

He stopped suddenly and his face grew crimson.

"I have an awkward trick of letting myself when there is no special business on hand," he said, with a smile that was sad enough, Heaven knows. "I forget sometimes that I am only a working man and a servant."

There was the least possible tinge of bitterness in his voice, and he glanced down at the badge he wore, not in contempt so much as sorrow if his face spoke truly.

"Then you were not always a conductor?" I said, eagerly. "I was sure of it, though I never saw you till this morning."

"Oh, no," he replied; and somehow he left out the "air" which he had used before, and spoke to me as if I were an equal. "But don't think I am discontented. There are plenty of better men than me doing this. I walked about London streets starving, and, what was worse,

seeing my mother starve too, before I was lucky enough to get the introduction that put me here. I am thankful beyond measure for the place; it gives her a comfortable home."

"But it is hard work, is it not?" I asked.

I had vague ideas that the hours were long and the fatigue great, but I had never troubled myself to think much about it.

"Very hard," was the quiet answer. "I thought at first that I should never harben to it. I used to go home at night, and cruelly late it was, and throw myself down on the floor or anywhere, too tired even to undress or to eat. If I had not had my mother to look after me I think I should have died. But she got me into a regular way of taking a cup of something warm—cocoa, or coffee, or whatever she had for me before I fell asleep—and then I could go to bed like anyone else and enjoy my night's rest. I don't know how the men do, and there are plenty of them, who have only landladies to depend on for their comforts. They get none out of doors, and the few hours of home are all they can have of rest or peace."

All the while he was talking to me there was the same wistful, waiting look on his face as if he saw someone, and his eyes kept wandering from mine to the other side of the car. I felt a great desire to know more of him, and resolved to find out who he was and where he lived if I could do so without appearing intrusive.

I did not tell Susan anything about him—I have a dislike to being lectured, and my good sister is an adept in the use of her tongue when she conceives that there is anything to be spoken about—neither did I get an opportunity of speaking to the young man himself again for some days.

I went to town more than once, but the weather was bad and the cars always crowded. He greeted me when he saw me with a respectful "Good day," but he never addressed me otherwise.

I found out his name and a little more about him from a driver to whom I had rendered some little assistance in a time of trouble. I found him one day sunning himself against the wall of the stables on the Rise, which had not been abolished then to suit a local doctor's convenience, and I asked him if he could tell me anything about the conductor of the car I named.

"Oh, yes," he said, after a pause. "Grumbling Billy's conductor, I know."

I had heard of Grumbling Billy, who was somewhat of a celebrity amongst the drivers, and I supposed he was right.

"We call that chap 'Gentleman Dicky,'" he said.

"Who is he?"

"Blest if I know," was the answer, only he did not say exactly "blessed." "He keeps his mother in swell lodgings somewhere, and comes out in clean shirts like the Prince of Wales. We don't know much about him, but—"

"But what?"

"We think he isn't quite right—that he's off his head a bit."

"Why? He seems to attend to his business all right."

"Oh, yes; he's 'eute enough there; he knows what he's about, but there's a screw loose somewhere."

"What makes you think so?"

"I don't know nothing, I don't," the driver said, looking at me with a knowing air that was rather comical; "but others do, and they say he sees ghosts and that. It's a queer start; but all about him's queer for that matter."

CHAPTER II.

RICHARD CHESNEY'S STORY.

There we sat down upon a garden mound, Two mutually enfolded, Love the thairc,
Between us in the circle of his arms
Entwined us both.

I CAME to know "Grumbling Billy's" conductor very well as the time went on. I went up and down with him frequently, and I found

he was keeping his position longer than most of the men did.

I did not wonder at it, for he was obliging and civil, and I was sure he was honest. He was business-like too, and a man had need be business-like to manage a tramcar; he must be quick both mentally and bodily, and he must know how to hold his own and keep riotous people in order if need be, and there is need now and then in holiday times.

He always seemed pleased to see me, and now and then we had a chance of a few words. I got at a little of his history from himself in this way.

His father had been a clergyman of good family, but with neither means nor interest, and his whole life had been a struggle. He had managed to educate his son in a superior fashion, but just as the young man left the university he died, and his widow and the lad were thrown on the world to fight their way as best they might.

This was a common story enough. They had a little money which was lost through the failure of a bank—one of those enormous smashups which fill the papers with news and break hearts by the hundred.

It was no consolation to the delicate widow and her son that the directors were prosecuted and their goods seized. It did not help them to a living, nor sweeten the shock of finding themselves suddenly thrown helpless on the world or the next.

And they were helpless—how terribly so many an educated man who has no business at his fingers' end can tell—and Richard Chesney tried with all his might to face the world and find something to do that would put bread into his mother's mouth and his own. His story is the story of thousands—a tale of hope deferred till the heart's sickness becomes death almost, and there seems no hope or help in this world or the next.

They had starved, he and his gentle mother—had passed days without food, and nights of cold for want of the comforts they had parted with that they might live, when someone helped him to the berth in which I found him—some one who had known his father gave him a recommendation and found the security, and he took the drudgery and thought his weekly pitance wealth.

"Something better will turn up for you some day," I said to him one morning when we were chatting before the car started. "It is only a stepping stone, maybe."

"I live in hope, sir," was the cheery reply, "for mother's sake. I should like to do better for her."

"Is it all for 'mother'?" I asked. I was curious about him or I should never have put such a question. "Perhaps you will marry some day, and then it will be for your wife you will want to rise as well."

I was sorry I had spoken, for I never saw such a change come over a man's face in my life as came over his—a look of sick pain and despair.

"That will never be, sir," he said. "I shall never marry."

"Why not? You are quite young."

"Yes; but—There's something wrong with that horse, I must go."

He sprang out of the car as he spoke and ran to the horses' heads. The driver was absent for a moment, and one of the brutes, perhaps stung by a fly, was kicking out right and left. I don't know how it happened, I did not see, but there seemed to be a great whirling of hoofs, and then Richard Chesney was thrown out into the road and lay there motionless. I was out of the tram in a moment, and by his side before they picked him up. He was not unconscious, but he was badly hurt.

"I feel broken all over," he said, and he groaned involuntarily as they lifted him up. "On, mother, what shall I do? What will you do?"

"Where does she live?" I asked. "Will you let me go and tell her? They had better take you to the hospital at once. Things may not be as bad as they seem."

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He smiled and thanked me, but he could hardly speak, and I called a cab, and with a man who was off duty I took him to St. Thomas's Hospital. I knew some of the staff there, and I had a fancy for seeing him well attended to.

"I am not going to leave you till I know what injuries you have sustained," I said to him; "and then I am going to tell your mother. I want to carry a true tale to her, you know."

He was very thankful, and said so. There was not much fear of any of the men carrying the story to his home, for they did not know where he lived, and I cheered him by telling him that I would have the case properly represented to the company, so that he might be exonerated from any blame in the matter of the accident and be entitled to his pay.

A broken arm and severe bruises were all the injuries. There was nothing dangerous, but he would be a prisoner for a little while, and with this news I started off to find Mrs. Chesney, who lived not very far from where the catastrophe had happened. I found her in a little street close to the Penitentiary in a modest lodging of two rooms, but looking, as they were, the abode of a lady, poor as they were. She was a gentle, nervous-looking woman, and I was heartily sorry for the tidings I had to tell her.

"My boy, my boy," she faltered when I had told my tale as carefully as I possibly could. "Will they let me go to him, do you think?"

"You may go as soon as you like," I replied. I took care to ascertain that much. "He is well cared for and comfortable. I told the cabman to wait, and as I have to go back that way myself I shall be happy to escort you as far if you will allow me."

She was very thankful, and I had the happiness of seeing her stand by the bedside of her son and assure herself that he was not dangerously hurt. It was the beginning of our acquaintance, and I came to like Mrs. Chesney very much. She was a lady, a refined and gentle woman whom no adversity could spoil, and she was never tired of telling me of the goodness and devotion of her idolised son.

"He would starve himself for me," she said to me one day with tears in her loving eyes. "He has done it many a time since we came to London. It was for me that he gave up all thoughts of making a place for himself in the world and took to the trams. It nearly broke my heart to see him at first. I have grown more reconciled to it now."

"It may be the stepping stone to better things," I said, cheerily, inwardly resolving that I would make it so if I could when the young man was well again. "I am sure he is fit for something more congenial than taking fares and punching tickets."

"Ah, yes. But I sometimes fear that he has lost all heart. He has been sorely tried has my boy."

She sighed as she spoke, and somehow I guessed that my young acquaintance had had heart troubles—perhaps a grief like my own. No, not like that, such a horror falls to the lot of very few in this world. Richard Chesney had lost his love, but not by death. There are other sorrows quite as hard to bear.

"Why should he lose heart?" I asked, with interest. "He is young and has the world before him."

"Life seems to be over for him, poor lad," said the mother, with a sigh. "It's a common enough story, I daresay, but it is none the less sorrowful."

"Love of course."

"Yes."

"A faithless lady?"

"No. At least he will not believe so, and neither will I. I think she was forced to act as she did. I know she loved him, and he—"

Her voice faltered and she broke down for a moment and wiped her eyes.

"He loved the ground she walked upon, and air she breathed, I suppose?" I said. "It is the way of the young. I can recall the time when life was all one dream of happiness for me, and it came to an end in a single moment."

"So did my poor Dick's day dream," Mrs.

Chesney said, sadly. "It was all so happy, and he was so grateful to Heaven for his great bliss. He was at college you know. He has told you that his poor father managed to do that much for him?"

"Yes."

"And he was engaged to be married to the daughter of an old acquaintance of my husband's. An old friend I should have said in those days, but adversity proves who are friends and who are only friendly on the surface. Two things happened at almost the same time. My husband's sudden death and Mr. Pelham's accession to a large fortune."

"And he let that make a difference?"

"He did. He had not objected before. We were all pleased at the prospect of the marriage. My boy was steady and persevering, and Esther Pelham was a domestic, home-loving girl. Two young people more suited to each other never came together in this world. The only objection was their youth, they were both young, and the smallness of the means they would have to begin the world upon. But their parents on both sides had had to begin in the same fashion, and there never was a happier marriage than mine. The Queen's revenues could not have made us happier than we were on the scanty pittance."

"Riches don't always bring bliss," I said, as she paused in her tale. "Love will often turn from the palace to the cottage, Mrs. Chesney."

"There was love in our cottage, and I hoped for the same for our boy," she replied. "We were making our little preparations, and so was Esther Pelham. She was as beautiful as she was good. I think I never saw a lovelier face, nor such rippling waves of golden brown hair. I loved her as dearly as if she were indeed the daughter she was so soon to be, and when my poor husband died I was thankful to think that Richard would have such a sweet consoler for a wife. Scarcely a fortnight after he died came the news of the great fortune that had come to Mr. Pelham, and on the top of that—I think I shall never forget the night as long as I live—there was a letter from Mr. Pelham himself, enclosing one from Esther, telling Richard, poor boy, that all must be over between them. The gentleman had other views for his daughter, he said, and she—well, she wrote in the same strain, and said she had come to see how very inexpedient a marriage between herself and Mr. Chesney would be, and begged to free him from his engagement."

"Good Heavens! What an abominable thing to do," I exclaimed, feeling very much as if I should like to find this Mr. Pelham and throttle him. "What did your son do?"

"Nothing. What was there to be done? There was the letter in Esther's own pretty handwriting. I have no doubt that it was dictated to her. She never wrote it of her own free will. But we had our pride, my boy and I, and we made no protest. Mr. Pelham was rich and we were poor, and if Esther's love could not stand the change of affairs it was not worth much. Her father had other views for her, she said. And it would appear that he had, for in a very little while we saw the announcement of her marriage. We did not know then whom she had married, but we heard afterwards that he was a man of supposed wealth and useful to Mr. Pelham in various speculations he had entered into. It was a bitter blow to my Dick, and for some time I thought he would sink under it. It has broken his heart, poor lad; he will never be my own bright boy again."

"He is young yet," I said, cheerily. "He will come to forget it some time. The image of the girl who was false to him will fade and make room for that of someone else quite as good perhaps. Time works wonders, you know."

"For some people, but not for Dick. He will never forget Esther Pelham. He is not allowed to."

"Not allowed to. What do you mean?"

"Just what I say, sir. You will not laugh at me if tell you the story."

"Why should I laugh?"

"Because— But you shall hear it—I know Dick will not mind. It is a strange affair, but

it is true, as true as that you and I are talking together at this moment."

CHAPTER III.

WHY DICK COULD NOT FORGET.

Forget thee! If to dream by night, and think of thee by day,
If all the worship deep and wild a poet's heart can pay,
If prayers in absence breathed for thee to Heaven's power,
If winged thoughts that fit to thee, ten thousand in an hour,
If busy fancy, blending thee with all my future lot,
If this thou call'st forgetting, thou indeed shalt be forgot.

Dick in the hospital was doing very well indeed when I had become intimate with his mother to the degree that permitted of my hearing his story from her lips. He would be out soon, they said, and able to resume his work. His salary had been regularly paid, and he had been exonerated from blame in the accident that had laid him up. Whether this would have been the case if I had not been an eye witness of it I can't say. The company are not over generous, and are glad to get rid of a salary when they can; but I am no inconsiderable shareholder, and I am intimate with many of the most influential men amongst them.

Mrs. Chesney thought everything that was good of them, and never failed to speak of their justice and liberality in a fashion that must have pretty well astonished a good many people. It was not for me to underrate her, nor to point out to her what interest had been brought to bear to produce the pleasant result of her son's weekly salary all the time he was laid by. She was like the mother in Burns's immortal poem:

Weel pleased thair bairns respectit like the lave.

She thought it was all for Dick's virtues that the company were so kind, and she was happy in the thought.

The young man himself was not so easily taken in, and declined point blank to believe in the tenderheartedness of the directors.

"It is all your doing, sir, and I am grateful to you for it," he said. "They would have given my mother something to bury me if I had been killed maybe, but they can always find in some way that an accident was a man's own fault. I've seen too much of it not to know that."

"Ah, well, don't underrate your mother," I said, "it makes things pleasant for her—she is so proud to go and take the money, and she has a right to it."

"Yes, sir, I've done my duty," Dick replied. "I was hurt doing it. There's nothing to thank them for particularly."

I was intensely interested in the story that Mrs. Chesney told me—it was a common enough romance in the main facts, the old, old story of how the course of true love never did run smooth.

Her boy was despairing almost for some time after Esther Pelham's marriage; he did not believe she had written that cruel letter of her own free will, though he had accepted the position and never attempted to resume his acquaintance with her. He felt she was unhappy, and there was a feeling on him that he should meet her some time and know more about it.

"And has he?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"In the tram. He was on the North London line then, and we had a lodgings in the Liverpool Road, where I could see him go past as the car went backwards and forwards. I was looking out one day—I was as foolish over my boy as if I was a young wife looking out for her husband, but I fancy it cheered him to see my face sometimes—and I saw him go by. He was standing at the back of the tram looking out as usual, but he might have been a thousand miles away for all he knew of what he was doing or where he was going."

"What can be the matter with him?" I said to myself, for his face was as white as if he were

on his death-bed, and there was a drawn look of pain on it that I did not like to see. I should have liked to have run after the tram and found out; but the stopping place was a long way off, and he would have started back before I could have got there. I thought I would wait till he came back and get into the car with him, but I knew he had a dislike to my showing myself anywhere about his car, and I resolved to wait. When the car returned he was inside and I did not see him, and he was rather later than usual coming home that evening."

"And you were on thorns, I suppose?" I said, as she paused in her story.

"Indeed I was, sir; I don't know what I thought had happened to him, but I felt sure that something had, and his face told me the same story when at last he came."

"No tea, thank you, mother," he said, quietly, "I can't eat anything."

"What is the matter?" I asked. "What has happened?"

"Nothing, old lady," he said, trying to smile, but the smile would not come, try as he would. "I am only a bit tired, that's all."

"Then you've been tired ever since your second journey this morning," I said. "I saw you go by looking so white and wan. Ah, Dick dear, don't keep anything from me. Tell me what it is."

"Nothing, mother," he said, staring into the fire. "Only I am a fool, that's all."

"How, dear?"

"I can't forget, and I've seen her."

"Esther Pelham?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"In my car."

"In a tramcar! She—Miss Pelham?"

"She's not Miss Pelham now, mother. She is Mrs. Carberry Dundas, and a bitter pill she must have in Mr. Carberry Dundas if his looks don't belie him."

"Then he was with her?"

"Yes."

"And how did she look—and what is he like?"

"I was curious or I might not have asked the question, for my poor boy winced at the very mention of her name."

"She looked as if there were not a step between her and the other world, mother," he said, "so worn and wretched. However that marriage came about she has suffered enough to atone for any treachery of hers in the matter. I never saw anyone so worn and sorrowful-looking."

"And he—what is he like?"

"He looks like a tiger, smooth and sleek and well fed. He is bitterly cruel to her."

"How can you know that?" I asked, for I thought Dick might be drawing on his imagination a little. All that we had heard about Mr. and Mrs. Dundas had been to the effect that he was well to do and kept her a comfortable home. "Perhaps she was not well."

"Well!" and Dick laughed bitterly as he spoke. "Mother, she looked starved."

"Starved?"

"Just that. A white, feeble creature, and she badly clothed too. She looked poor even to meanness, and he was well dressed and portly, the scoundrel!"

"I could not help thinking he had been mistaken and seen someone else, and I told him so."

"No, mother, it was Esther," he said; "and he brought her there that I might see her in her misery. I heard him say that that was her old sweetheart's car, and she would have a chance of seeing how he looked with a badge on. I could have struck him where he sat, the bound!"

"And what did she say?" I asked.

"I was very sorry that the meeting had come about, but I was very curious to hear all I could about Esther. I had liked her very much, and it had been a bitter blow to me when the separation came."

"She did not answer," Dick said, "but she winced as if he had struck her, and when I went round for the fares he turned to her savagely and bade her pay. She had some loose money,

he said. She was agitated and confused—I could see that as our fingers touched in the transaction—and I am sure I was; and he seemed to gloat over her misery. It was just like a cat with a mouse. He will kill her some day."

"That chance meeting made Dick quite nervous, and he harped on the notion that Esther was dying till he grew quite thin and pale himself."

"We shall hear more about her yet, mother," he used to say, when he spoke of it, which was not often; and sure enough we did."

"What did you hear?"

"Of her death, sir."

"She is dead then?"

"Now she is, but only lately. The first thing we heard was that she was going abroad with her husband. She was out of health, they said, and he was to take her to Italy. She wrote to me herself and told me that much."

"To you?"

"Yes. She would not write to Dick. She should never see either of us again, she said. She was going away to die, she was sure of that, and she was not sorry. She begged our pardon for all the sorrow she had caused us, and she said we should know some day perhaps, in the next world if not in this, that it was not all her fault. Poor dear, we did not think so now, and she bade us good bye. She did not make any complaint, but it was easy to see from the letter that she was heartbroken. She went—Mr. Dundas took care that everybody should know that he had taken berths for himself and his lady for the voyage—and he came back in less than a month without her."

"She died abroad then?"

"So he says. And he goes about in black with a band on his hat as broad as the hat itself. But it's sham grief. He wanted her out of the way."

"What makes you think so?"

"I can't tell you, sir, but I do think it. He has her father completely under his thumb now. Mr. Pelham is a broken-down man, partly through sickness and partly through money worries. The fortune never brought him any great comfort, for he has speculated with it till he does not know what belongs to him and what to his son-in-law. Mr. Dundas is master now, but there'll come a day of reckoning for him yet. That poor thing never had fair play."

"What do you mean?" I asked, startled beyond measure at her words. "Do you think he murdered her?"

"Dick does."

"Why?"

"Because he has seen her."

"Seen her?"

I am no believer in ghosts, and I hardly understood her at first, but she repeated her assertion quietly, and with the air of one who thoroughly believes all she is uttering.

"Twice," she said. "It was the cause of his being removed to the south side. He will find out all about it some day."

I thought of the time when he had seemed to see someone or something in the car, and had spoken and said "My darling" so distinctly.

"Tell me all about it," I said to Mrs. Chesney. "He was under a delusion, of course."

"I don't think he was," she said, somewhat sadly. "Dick is not fanciful. The first time was the very night that I read the account of her death in the paper. He had not seen it, and coming down the Holloway Road he saw her sitting there amongst the passengers. She was dressed even worse than she had been when he saw her with her husband, and looked at him imploringly as if she wanted to say something but could not. He spoke to her, but she did not answer, and then all of a sudden she was gone, he could not tell how, and the inspector, who was

sitting in the car, and was a hard, unjust man, reprimanded him for inattention, and accused him of being drunk. It happened again about a week after. She was there again, and as ill luck would have it the same officer was also there again, and abused him before all the passengers. It was well for us that he had such a good character or he would have lost his

situation on a false charge of drunkenness, but there were people on the board who had noticed Dick and his good conduct and smartness, and they did not discharge him. They only shifted him to a fresh place. The doctor of the company recommended it. He said that men got fanciful through being always on the same route, and that a change was always advisable when it could be managed. We were glad to come here, for the thing had got wind somehow, and my poor lad was being teased about seeing ghosts, and so forth, though no one, of course, but ourselves knows the real truth. I am like Dick, and I can't help thinking that something will come of it some day."

CHAPTER IV.

HOW SHE TOLD HIM.

I well believe
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know,
And so far will I trust thee.

It was a queer story, this tale of a ghost which Mrs. Chesney told me. Of course I believed that the young man had been deceived by a fancy likeness in some of his passengers, and I made up my mind to talk to him the first time I had an opportunity.

Nothing is so bad in any case of delusion as to let the mind brood on it, and this was of course a delusion of the saddest kind. Fancying that he saw the woman he had loved so passionately was enough of itself to upset him and make him unfit for his work, and I had faith in my own powers of reasoning. Elderly folks always think they know so much better than their younger friends, and are apt to forget that fresh, clear, young heads are sharper than those which have done their work in this world and have come to the period of rest and shrinking from the go-ahead proclivities of the busy world around them.

I might have spared my breath as far as any reasoning with Richard Chesney on the subject of his love was concerned. He was soon out of hospital and at his work again—very grateful to me for what I had done for him. He knew how I had served him, though his mother did not, but all my boasted reasoning with him on the subject of what he had seen was no good.

"I am glad my mother told you, sir," he said, quietly, "for I saw you look at me one day as if you were wondering when I saw her. It was in this very tram, almost the first time I ever saw you."

"Only the second," I replied. "It was when I went back from town in the evening. Were you speaking to HER?"

"Yes, sir. She was there."

He spoke quite quietly, as if he were talking of some ordinary passenger. There was not the least trace of discomposure about him, nor any doubt.

"But there was no one there," I argued, "except myself. The car was empty."

"I saw her, sir, as I have seen her before, as I shall see her again, my darling," he said, in a low tone of passionate endearment. "There is some reason for it. That was the third time."

"But, you surely don't think—you a sensible man—that you have seen a spirit?" I said. I could not think how to argue with him about it, he spoke of it so coolly. "She is dead, and—"

"Yes, sir, she's dead, and that's it. It is something about her death that brings her to me. I shall know if I have patience, I am sure."

His quiet conviction silenced me. It was difficult to deal with anyone so firmly convinced as he was that these fancies of his meant anything, and I left off arguing. I said no more to him for the present, but I did not let my acquaintance with his mother drop. I even persuaded my sister to pay her a visit, and to my great delight she for once expressed herself pleased with my protégés. Nothing was said to her of course about the sad ending of Richard

Chesney's love dream nor the curious fact of his having seen the lady since her reported death.

The bare mention of such a thing would have been enough to draw down on all our heads a lecture such as my sister delights in. She is fond of talking, and does not spare her tongue when she has a subject to hold forth upon.

A cold, dreary winter wore itself out during my intercourse with Richard Chesney, and spring began to break again and things to put on a brighter aspect. The young man had kept his place on the south side cars, and seemed to be doing well. He never presumed on our acquaintance, but always gave me a cheery "Good day" whenever we met, as we often did.

I had left off speaking to him of what I considered his delusion, and I hoped it had worn off, as I heard nothing more about it. I went away to the country for a few days, and on my return I made my way home in the car of which my protégé was conductor. I was the only passenger at the start—it was a slack time of the day—and I had a chance of speaking to him.

"You are looking ill," I said.

And he was—strangely pale and worn.

"I am worried," was the answer. "She is here. She has been here off and on all day, and I cannot get at what it is she wants."

I stared at him in alarm, for his face was white and his hands were shaking. Whatever the fancy had been it had unnerved him completely.

"Don't think of it," I said, speaking low, for someone else had come in. "You will not be fit for your work if you go on like this, you know."

"I must give it up," he said, despairingly. "I cannot bear it. Why does she come and not speak? What does she want me to do?"

"Hush!" I said, somewhat sharply, for I fully believed his brain was turning a little. "Put it out of your head. It is no use worrying about it."

I couldn't help watching him, for his manner was so strange. He was busy enough presently, for it began to rain, and the car was crowded, and people persisted in getting on the step and wanting to come in when they couldn't, as they always will.

Richard Chesney seemed to come to his senses with the necessity for action, and went on with his ticket punching in his ordinary careful fashion.

All of a sudden I saw him stop opposite a woman about half-way down the car on the other side from me. The old look came into his face that it had always worn when he had been speaking to me of what he had seen, and I looked at him, feeling a dread of something, I did not know what.

There was nothing in the woman's appearance particular, except that she was thinly clad for a rainy night, and looked very pale and sad. He bent forward to her for a moment, and I saw her lips move as if she were speaking to him. He gave her no ticket, so I concluded that she had told him that she would be paid for outside, as so many women are, and he passed on.

I saw him give the next passenger a ticket, and I noticed that his hand shook, and the girl he had been speaking to was gone! How or when I could not see. We had not stopped, and for any woman to have got out of the car at the pace it was going at would have been simply impossible.

Where was she? I looked up and down the sides—we were over-crowded, and I fancied she might have shifted her place—but she was not there. She had been so completely different in her dress and appearance from anyone there that I could not have missed her if she had been there at all.

It was very odd, and I resolved to ask Chesney if he had noticed how she got out. He had occasion to come to the driver for something in a few minutes' time, and I noticed he was terribly agitated about something. When our journey came to an end I stopped him for a minute.

"Something has been puzzling me for the last quarter of an hour," I said to him.

"Indeed, sir. What is it?"

"What became of one of your passengers?" He looked puzzled, and waited for me to explain.

"If it had been a man, I should have thought he had got down, as men often do, while the car was going on," I said, "but it was a woman. I saw you speak to her, but you did not give her a ticket. I supposed she had people outside; she had only a thin, light cloak on and a white hat. It was such a queer dress for this weather that I remarked it."

A blank look of horror came into Richard Chesney's face as he looked at me, and his teeth chattered as if he had the ague.

"You—saw—her?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"It was Esther, my dead darling, and she has spoken at last. I know now."

I am not a nervous man, but I did feel at that moment as if someone had poured a canful of cold water down my back. To be suddenly told that you have seen a ghost and to feel an inward conviction that it is true is not a pleasant thing, and for a moment I could find nothing to say. It was Chesney's hour off, and he could afford the time to talk to me.

"I must go to Carberry Oaks," he said. "That is where she lived. She is lying there."

I could not speak. I was too much taken aback, and he went on.

"She said to me, as I stood in front of her, 'Under the summer-house at Carberry Oaks.' The words were as distinct as mine are to you at this moment. We shall find her there."

He spoke in a tone of absolute certainty, and I was too astonished to say a word in contradiction.

"What shall you do?" I asked.

"Go there," was the prompt reply. "Will you come with me?"

I was excited and curious, and I said "Yes," without considering what the consequences might be.

Carberry Oaks was where Mrs. Dundas and her husband had lived, and he might be there now for aught Richard Chesney knew. He obtained a day's leave with some difficulty, and we went together.

It was a poor place—a shabby little villa on the edge of Hampstead Heath. It was like its owner to give it such a name, and it was empty. People were coming in, the person who had the keys told us. She believed it was positively let, but there was some hitch about the garden. They wanted to alter it, and Mr. Dundas would not allow anything to be touched.

We managed to get in on pretence of looking at the place, and we made for the garden, where a wretched, rickety old summer-house stood in one corner.

"Under the summer-house," said the young man, as we went towards it. "I shall find her, I know I shall."

All the world knows that he did find her. The story of a lady's having been found buried in a garden was in everybody's mouth as soon as the papers could put it there.

Poor Esther Dundas had never gone abroad. Her troubles had been over before her wicked husband started on that journey to Italy. Who had accompanied him and personated his wife no one seemed to know, and he defeated the ends of justice by poisoning himself.

The story is an old one now, and well nigh forgotten. All sorts of tales went about as to how the foul deed had been discovered, but there are only three people in the world who can throw any light on that part of the business—Richard Chesney, his mother, and myself.

He is not a tram conductor now, but a clerk in an old city house, with an increasing salary and very good prospects. People wonder why he does not marry. He is young still, and attractive, and, above all, steady, but very few people know that he has no heart for any woman, and that he will go to his grave a bachelor like myself for the sake of the one love of his life—poor murdered Esther Dundas.

NOBLE AT LAST;

OB,

THE HEADSMAN OF ROUEN.

(AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.)

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEAD ALTERNATIVE.

GABRIELLE uttered another low cry of fear and horror upon recognising the executioner.

But, after motioning him off with a gesture painfully expressive of her loathing, and seeing that he remained where he was, she again sank upon the edge of the rude couch, from which she had started at the slight sound of his entrance, and resumed her resigned, despairing attitude.

Gaultier paused a moment, with heaving breast and close-clenched teeth, as though to collect himself, and then advanced to her side.

"Lady," he began, in low, hoarse and tremulous tone, "it is for your own sake rather than for my own that I am here again to shudder beneath your unjust scorn and hatred."

"How, Sir Headsman? For my sake, indeed!" she murmured, looking up at him with a bitter and incredulous smile.

"I speak in sad earnestness, lady. I left you with an assurance that it was out of my power to save you. I was wrong. I had forgotten, or ignored, one clause of the law pertaining to my office, by which, on a single condition, I could snatch you from the death you fear, and set you free, with no penalty hanging over your head."

She sprang to her feet with a wild, trembling eagerness which told of the volcano of hope that still raged, though smoulderingly, beneath her desolation and despair.

"But this I can only do with your own consent," continued Gaultier, after a pause. "In your own hands lies your fate."

"Oh, the Lord of Mercy bless you for those words!" cried the prisoner, clasping her hands. "Your heart is kind, despite your awful trade! Speak! You will save me, then?"

"I will do all that lies in my power," he answered, in a voice that quivered with emotion, "but your fate rests with yourself. Unless you consent to the condition I can do nothing."

"My consent! Does the hand of the drowner disregard the floating straw? You do but mock me!"

"Far from it. I only fear that you will look upon the alternative with more horror than upon your doom."

"Impossible! Oh, is there aught I would not do for safety and freedom? Speak, I beseech you. Name the condition, which I accept beforehand."

He drew a step nearer to her, bent yet lower down, and breathed hard a moment ere he spoke. Then the answer came from between his set teeth, slowly and faintly, but audibly:

"At dawn in the morning—scarce two hours from this moment—you die!" he muttered.

"If, before that hour, you are wedded to me, life and liberty are yours! Do you still consent?"

Her sudden descent from hope to despair was terrible to witness. She shrank from him appalled.

"Wedded to you, the Executioner of Rouen!" she faltered. "Angels of Heaven, how have I so deeply offended you that you should breathe, or think, or dream such monstrous wrong?"

"You will not consent, then?" said Gaultier, sadly. "You even prefer death to a marriage with me?"

"Ah! Heaven have mercy, have mercy!" cried Gabrielle, wildly. "Man!—caitiff!—know you what it is you ask? What! I, of the Montforts' ancient race, in whose veins flows the blood of Charlemagne!—I, the betrothed of Bertrand de Chanzy, the bravest knight in France!—I, to so degrade myself, to so dishonour blood and race by wedding you—the headsman—the

public hangman—a low-born, blood-stained executioner?"

"Such brutal scorn is in ill-keeping with your loveliness, lady," said Gaultier, maintaining his composure, though every word that she had said had pierced him like a dagger. "Does this prison-cell—the sentence under which you lie—the crime of which you stand convicted—not degrade you, then? Is it no dishonour to the blood and race you vaunt so proudly that you die a criminal upon the public scaffold amid the hootings of the rabble throng? Would there were another alternative to save you—but none exists?"

"I do not believe you, sir."

"Here is a copy of the statute," said Gaultier, drawing from his bosom the leaves which he had torn from the book of laws. "Listen, and judge for yourself."

And he forthwith read, in low but distinct tones, the words of the statute pertaining to his own reward, and the saving clause regarding the condemned criminal that followed them.

"I wronged you in charging you with falsehood, sir," muttered Gabrielle, who had listened to the reading with a strange and death-like calmness. "But my answer is the same."

"You understand, however, that I also would make a sacrifice in saving you?" said Gaultier. Your death at my hands would not alone ennoble me, but open to my trend a proud and honourable career, that I have toiled and hoped for through these miserable years of scorn, contempt and loathing."

"My Lord of Scaffolds, let me congratulate you beforehand, since my wretched head is but the final stepping-stone to your ambition!" exclaimed the prisoner, with dreary sarcasm. "Or may I ask you why you have thought such splendour to forego by wedging such as me?"

"You may ask, and be answered," replied Gaston, huskily. "It is because I love you—you have loved you from the first—must ever love you!"

"You insult me yet more deeply!" cried Gabrielle, proudly, but with her white cheek crimsoning at his words. "There can be no discolour in the scaffold for me, for I am guiltless of the crime that brings me to my death. But think you I have fallen so low as to but listen to so monstrous a condition as that which you propose? Cruel, inhuman wretch, leave me to my misery until we meet to-morrow!"

"One moment more before you seal your doom!" cried Gaultier, and extending his hand with passionate appealing.

"Away! Is the man mad? Thinks he that I would touch his hand?"

"You have often done so, lady—trustingly, as a child—confidingly as a woman—though you knew it not!"

"I? Oh, monstrous! When have I ever touched your hand?"

"Full many a time and oft, in the Black Grotto, where I, in hermit's guise, for years have striven to taste men's gratitude and love, as compensation for the scorn and hate my public office so o'erwhelmed me with."

Gabrielle regarded him with a dazed and haggard look and then put her hands wonderingly to her temples.

"Can it be possible?" she murmured. "You—you that kind Good Father whom all men adored, who counselled me as a child and woman, soothed my woes, beguiled my fears, and lightened my distress! Strange! And yet I mark resemblance now in voice, in mien, in lofty carriage. What, you, indeed?"

"The very same! and as I watched your growth from child's to woman's sphere, I learned to love you with a wild, despairing love!" cried Gaston, as she again sank upon the couch, and covered her face with her trembling hands. "But can you charge that I was selfish? Was it a proof of selfishness that I did aid in secret your proscribed betrothed whom I had such cause to hate—who has returned my benefits with ingrate words and deeds? That I restored him to your arms, and planned your interviews, when every loving word exchanged between you was a poignard to my heart? Oh!

scorn, condemn me as you will, but pray accuse me not of meanness, baseness, and for self!"

He spoke with noble vehemence, and when she looked up to him again her scornful expression had given way in great part to a sort of wondering respect.

"I do not accuse you of that, sir," said she, gently. "But—" putting her hands to her brow again—"it is so strange, so wonderful! I feel perplexed—confused!"

Gaultier threw from him his cloak, which until now had partly concealed his form, and stood erect before her, in all the pride and dignity of his manly comeliness.

"Listen to my story, lady," said he, "you reject this the last chance left you for your life. In my veins flows blood as noble as your own. My father was a gallant Count of France, who perished by an English sword while I was yet an infant; but my mother was a peasant girl of Languedoc. She too died ere I could more than tribute to her tenderness, and I was left to the cold, unwilling charity of her brother. His good wife was my friend and still remains so, as the matron keeper of my lonely house, but he was brutal, harsh and cruel. Even as a child, I felt that I was different from the humble ones around me; and when, at the age of seventeen, my harsh uncle revealed to me my father's name—coupled with bitter taunts that I would never dare to claim it, in that his rightful marriage with my mother had been ignored and set aside by high-born influence—I awoke that though I might not claim that noble name, I too would die an honoured knight of France. At first I dreamed of winning my prize upon the battle field, but soon found out how vain was such a hope. While almost in despair I met the Executioner of Rouen and won his love, and told him of my purpose. He gave me ready sympathy, and offered to place me in the only path to success. The severing of nine noble heads, each at a single blow, raised an executioner to the rank of a French noble, and this is why so many educated but impoverished and obscure men have sought the office. My patron had already severed six, and he offered to take me as his assistant to teach me his bloody trade, and when he had struck his last blow, to procure for me the office which he filled. It cost my pride a mighty struggle, but I was young, bitter, ambitious, and desperate. I consented. I became what now I am. Already have eight noble heads fallen by one blow from my arm; yours would have been the ninth and the last."

He paused as if for breath, but more perhaps to note the effect of his words. Mademoiselle de Montfort had listened to him with the immobility of a frozen wax image, but with a strange, glowing gaze which showed that not a syllable of voice or meaning had escaped her.

"Go on," she murmured.

"I will not speak of my love for you, the mention of which has seemingly distressed you, lady," he went on, a little more hesitatingly than before, "further than to confess that for a time ambition triumphed in my breast over every other nobler, purer sentiment. Scarce two hours ago the thought that to-morrow's dawn would witness the accomplishment of my life's set goal, even with your death, exulted every other. Some inspiration made me suspect that you might have procured poison, and I hurried here in time to frustrate your deadly purpose. Heaven be praised that it was so! Not only did I arrest your desperate hand, as bent on self-destruction, but love—the love for you that had else been smothered—struggled fiercely with ambition, and it conquered. In my horror and desperation, and by the merest chance, my glance was directed to the saving clause—the legal condition by which alone the means are granted me to give not only life but liberty as well."

"That was enough, and I am here. But my wife, oh, Gabrielle! One more blow of this strong arm wins me nobility, opportunity and honour! Prince Louis, the dauphin, stands my friend; and the chance to strike will not be long delayed. It shall be the only one that I will ever strike again. I have wealth and power, comfort and elegance abide with me at home,

and I make no idle boast in saying that there is not in all France a noble better skilled in knightly exercises and accomplishments than I. Lady, fairest of the fair, I love you! Your happiness shall be the sole and highest object of my life. If courage, strength and iron resolution still have power to win their way, then honour, fame and fortune shall be laid before you as my consort. I have done much, I will and can do more. Will you still choose death sooner than my love?"

Listening to every word that he spoke with painful eagerness she stood with her eyes fixed upon his noble, eloquent face—with eyes that were troubled still, but no longer expressive of her scorn and hate. When he paused for reply she suddenly burst into a wild, tempestuous flood of tears.

He approached and ventured to bend over her, but she feebly waved him away.

"Oh, I know not what to do!" she cried, most pitifully through her sobs and moans. "God help me! It is too terrible, too strange!"

Gaultier himself stood irresolute and confused for some moments. Then he spoke again in low, gentle tones, full of respect and tenderness.

"Lady, I will leave you now," said he, "to calmly think of all that I have told you. Heaven is my witness, I would not press you for a speedy answer, were it in my power to delay! But it is not. At sunrise, scarcely two hours from this, 'twill be too late to choose. Death's bride or mine—which shall it be?"

The demoiselle turned away her face, and a convulsive shudder ran through her frame, but she murmured, in a low, mechanical voice:

"Would the ceremony—if decided on—have to take place upon the scaffold, sir?"

"Yes; it is the custom. We would stand together by the block, at least where the momentous question would be put to you by the chief judicial officer of Rouen in the king's name. If answered in the affirmative the ceremony of marriage would be completed by a priest, who would be in waiting within the prison. But all must be accomplished ere the culverin upon the bastions booms the sunrise hour."

She shuddered again, and without turning her face signed him to depart.

"Farewell, then!" said Gaultier, with even deeper respect. "God knows that I would set you free, unshackled, and without condition, were it in my power, even though I feel that it would bring me suffering, newer, keener, far more poignant than I yet have known! But I am powerless. I will come in one hour for your answer. The priest and judge shall be prepared, in case that you consent. In the meantime, may the good angels of peace bring calmness to your troubled breast. Sweet lady, farewell!"

He bowed and hurried from the cell and from the prison, to dispatch Roul upon momentous errands.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE SCAFFOLD.

For many moments after being left alone in solitude Gabrielle gave herself up to the bitterness of fruitless lamentations.

It was not until exhausted by the violence of her emotions that she sank back upon the rude pallet, and succeeded in forcing her thoughts to turn upon the tremendous decision that lay before her.

"Death's bride, or mine—which shall it be?"

That sentence of all others that Gaultier had spoken seemed to be branded in her brain with letters of scorching flame.

Either alternative was fraught with the keenest horror; though she could not but confess to her own soul that the executioner's eloquence and noble bearing had divested him of much of the repulsive objections with which her thoughts and feelings had clothed him but a little space before.

Her consciousness, likewise, of his identity with the Good Father of the Black Grotto had more to do with her change of sentiment to-

wards him occasioned which could in the end.

Then, aged grandje Chiant and acmet, at a deep, fervid dazzaled unreal for tinian been so roun might have passion its.

But during and his im dream-like active necessary sterner nature for help, powerful and his sombre.

Pure and soul which, cence, could studies of a

Her natural temper sweet France. She was f obedient, stand alone.

Had she from her in self-centred she was a chivalrous, she lived.

Now, dur hour, it would able, to anaing moods resolved to moment con were prefer union prop with fear, budding, budding, budding,

Suffice it of indecision noble face like at first more impression of his with the ele and sentiments strange, sa part which sumed in love, also in her nature and romantic.

Add to served, an decision the become the When Ga

he found in safety from

In spite dark face like though he

"Words said he, but in spirit but notice attire for a his splendi tage. "B and priest and here, a think you'll He went

time, who maid, burde which a t caused the

wards him than she herself was aware, for it occasioned a strange blending of associations, which could not but tend to soften her aversion in the end.

Then, again, Gabrielle had never loved Bertrand de Chanzy—almost the first and only brilliant and accomplished young man she had ever met, at the time of his urgency of his suit—with a deep, fervent, and all-abiding love; though he had dazzled her imagination into mistaking the unreal for the real to such a degree that a continuance of her association with him, which had been so rudely and unexpectedly interrupted, might have developed into the genuine master-passion itself.

But during her long ordeal of suffering she had not been permitted to see or hear of him, and his image had grown insubstantial and dream-like in her mind; while now the imperative necessity for the support of a stronger, sterner nature than her own, her piteous craving for help, sympathy and repose, furnished a powerful and influential advantage in favour of his sombre rival.

Pure and guiltless as she was, hers was not a soul which, sustained by a consciousness of innocence, could meet courageously the stormy vicissitudes of adverse fate.

Her nature was as tender and loving, her temper sweet and sunny as the skies of her own France.

She was formed to cling, with blind trust and obedience, to a stronger, loftier nature—not to stand alone.

Had she been blessed with a mother's care from her infancy upward, she might have been self-centred, indomitable, wise; but, as it was, she was a child of impulse, weak and irresolute, as well as proud, and moreover singularly romantic—a true daughter of the stirring and chivalrous, but partly barbarous, times in which she lived.

Now, during this eventful and all-momentous hour, it would be difficult, and perhaps unprofitable, to analyse the conflicting, swiftly succeeding moods to which she became a prey; now resolved to die, and then determine to live; one moment convinced that even the axe and block were preferable to the strange and unnatural union proposed to her, and the next frantic with fear and ready to preserve life—young, budding, palpitating life—at any sacrifice.

Suffice it to say, that through it all, the whirl of indecision, doubt and fear, the proud form and noble face of Gaston Gaultier, though phantom-like at first, rose steadily brighter, worthier and more impressive; while the throbbing recollection of his passionate, thrilling voice, freighted with the eloquence of hope, consideration, love, and sentiment, still rang upon her ears. His strange, sad story, combined with the hermit's part which he had so long and pathetically assumed in his hungry craving for esteem and love, also began to appeal to the strongest chord in her nature—her fondness for the picturesque and romantic.

Add to this that she was young, alone, unnerved, and terrified, and who can blame the decision that she finally came to—a decision to become the executioner's bride.

When Gaultier arrived at the end of the hour, he found her pale, trembling, tearful, excited, but ready to become his wife, and thus purchase safety from the scaffold.

In spite of her pitiful appearance, Gaultier's dark face lighted up with a wild, joyous triumph, though he endeavoured to conceal it.

"Words cannot express my thanks, fair lady," said he, bowing with the profoundest respect; and, in spite of her perturbation, she could not but notice that he had found time to change his attire for a magnificent apparel, which displayed his splendid proportions to the noblest advantage. "But no time is to be lost. The judge and priest are in waiting at the outer portals, and here, at your cell door, is someone whom I think you'll scarce regret to see."

He went to the door and admitted old Celestine, who was followed by Gabrielle's waiting-maid, burdened with an elegant change of attire, which a timely message from Gaultier had caused them to hastily gather up at the Chateau

de Montfort—whose master had discreetly absented himself therefrom ever since the murder of the baron—and then bring in person to their young mistress.

Gabrielle at once rushed into their arms, and Gaultier took advantage of the scene that ensued to withdraw unobserved; though he had cautioned the women beforehand to delay no longer than half an hour in preparing their mistress's toilet.

In the meantime the grey of dawn was just beginning to tint the eastern sky.

Notwithstanding the earliness of the hour, and that nearly an hour was yet to elapse before the time set for the execution, a dense crowd was already gathered around the scaffold. It was erected in the centre of the great square, directly in front of the castle prison, in which from time immemorial such scenes as the one anticipated had been enacted, and from which at present all traces of the riotous proceedings of a few hours before had been cleared away.

The scaffold was a square platform, standing about five feet from the ground, and with six steps reaching up to it from the prison side. In its centre was the block, with its ominous black drapery; and leaning against the block, blade uppermost, as was the custom in such preparations, was the stout-handled glistening axe.

A double row of stout halberdiers surrounded the scaffold to keep back the crowd of on-lookers, while two files of the regular prison-guard, armed with arquebuses and short swords, kept open a narrow lane leading from the six steps to the deep-set side door of the prison, in the massive wall a few yards to the right of the postern; and it was from this door that the executioner was expected to presently emerge, followed by the condemned between a father confessor and a judicial officer, as had always been the custom.

The assembled spectators, who every moment grew more numerous and more noisy, had received no intimation of the change in the hideous spectacle which had drawn them together. They were composed of both sexes, and of all ages and degrees.

Though the middle and artisan classes were most largely represented, there was an abundant sprinkling of resident and neighbouring gentry; for, popular as was the impression that the condemned prisoner was but to be made a scapegoat for her father's crime, and great as had been the sympathy, secret and expressed, for her ignominious doom, the assemblage was, nevertheless, a wild one, and decapitation scenes were sufficiently infrequent in Rouen to arouse morbid curiosity to the highest pitch.

There were prevalent the usual brutality and fierce democracy of bearing that characterise such scenes. Lord and peasant, shopkeeper and artisan, small-landed proprietor and charcoal-burner, well-to-do and beggar elbowed each other in the common press, shouted, commented, and made unseemly jokes of what should have been an affair of the utmost solemnity.

Market girls and burghers, wives, gipsy women, and army followers, mixed gaily together, and exchanged opinions respecting the high-born victim, and speculations as to how she would conduct herself at the critical moment.

With a few exceptions to the rule, all was ribald jollity and brutal mirth.

The dawn broadened and brightened. At last there was a movement among the steel caps forming the lane between scaffold and prison.

The crowd surged madly to and fro, each striving to look over the other's head.

"They come! They come!" was the cry.

(To be Continued.)

An old woman named M'Queen, who has for the past 14 or 15 years been getting parochial relief at Menstry, died the other week, and amongst her effects have been found money and cheques value £320; also a gold and a silver watch, silver spoons, and a quantity of napery.

TAME EELS.

A GENTLEMAN of Rockport, Massachusetts, has domesticated some eels by feeding them in a brook, till the largest one, two feet long, will allow him to take it into his hands and treat it as a kitten. When the owner goes to the brook, he calls them with a peculiar whistle, and they come rushing briskly from down stream. Not long ago, he brought them his usual lunch of fish, some mackerel, when only the large one came. The eel waited for a few moments, then turned down stream, and soon came back, bringing his tardy family to supper.

We might here mention that the question as to the generation of eels is considered one of the most puzzling in natural history. One ancient author supposed that eels were born of the mud; another, that they were produced from particles scraped from the bodies of large eels when they rubbed themselves against stones. There is a popular notion in many districts in the north of England that eels are generated from horsehair deposited in springs and rivulets. Small eels have been noticed in the thatch of cottages.

The ancient Egyptians gave the eel a place among their deities, and the Greeks were so passionately fond of this fish that it was a common saying among them that the dead would return to life if it were possible for them to taste a morsel of this delicious food. The ancient Anglo-Saxon tribes had grants and charters regulated by payments made in eels, and four thousand of them were a yearly present from the monks of Ramsey to those of Peterborough. There are several places in England which derive their names from the quantity of eels they formerly produced.

SLATE PENCILS.

In making slate pencils, broken slate is put into a mortar run by steam, and pounded into small particles. Then it goes into a mill and runs into a "bolting machine," such as is used in flouring mills, where it is "bolted," the fine, almost impalpable flour that results being taken to a mixing tub, where a small quantity of steatite flour, similarly manufactured, is added, together with other materials, the whole being made into a stiff dough.

This dough is kneaded thoroughly by passing it several times between iron rollers. Thence it is conveyed to a table where it is made into "charges," or short cylinders, four or five inches thick, and containing eight or twelve pounds each. Four of these are placed in a strong iron chamber, or "retort," with a changeable nozzle so as to regulate the size of the pencil, and subjected to tremendous hydraulic pressure, under which the composition is pushed through the nozzle in the shape of a long cord, and passes over a sloping table slit at right angles with the cords to give passage to a knife which cuts them into lengths. They are then laid on boards to dry, and after a few hours are removed to sheets of corrugated zinc, the corrugation serving to prevent the pencils from warping during the process of baking, to which they are next subjected in a kiln, into which superheated steam is introduced in pipes, the temperature being regulated according to the requirements of the article exposed to its influence.

From the kiln the articles go to the finishing and packing-room, where the ends are thrust for a second under rapidly revolving emery wheels, and withdrawn neatly and smoothly pointed. They are then packed in pasteboard boxes, each containing one hundred pencils, and these boxes are in turn packed for shipment in wooden boxes, containing one hundred, or ten thousand pencils in a shipping-box. Nearly all the work is done by boys, and the cost therefore is light.



[YOUTH AND AGE.]

OLIVE'S LOVERS.

As Olive Moseley slowly paced the broad gravel walk in the old garden that June morning she thought herself one of the most unhappy and ill-treated of young girls.

The rose-trees displayed their treasures of crimson, white, and gold to no purpose. She only saw through a mist of tears, for Aunt Ann had refused to allow her to visit her dearest friend, Amy Russell.

Amy's home was in Surrey. Olive had so enjoyed the visit she made there a year before, and Amy had written such glowing accounts of the pleasant days they would spend together, and Mrs. Russell's note to Miss Moseley, asking for the pleasure of Miss Olive's company for a few weeks, was so cordial, and—oh, dear! how kindly Aunt Ann was; and Olive wiped two great tears away from her smooth dark cheeks.

Aunt Ann, otherwise known as Miss Moseley, of Moseley House, Weyford, the cause of all this unhappiness, sat, erect and stately, at one of the upper windows of the old, rambling, red-brick house, and looked (with not the sweetest possible expression) at the young girl who was indulging in such improper thoughts.

Miss Moseley was an old maid—a tall, thin figure surmounted by a long thin face with high cheek-bones, and deep grey eyes that possessed the faculty of seeing to an almost unlimited extent.

The band of glossy flaxen hair above her wrinkled forehead was always nearly covered with caps that were fearfully and wonderfully made, if not becoming to the same extent.

The girl who called her aunt was in reality no nearer relation than a cousin's daughter. There had been a time—how many years before is of no consequence—when Miss Moseley had been young and fair, and in those days, "long since gone by," she had loved her cousin, Everard Moseley, as much as it was in her nature to love.

But they had quarrelled soon after the engagement was made public, and the marriage had been indefinitely postponed. Each pursued a different path after that, and late in life Mr. Moseley, while wandering on the Continent, fell in love with and married a young German girl. The union had been anything but blissful, but the two children who were born to the unhappy couple were left orphans, when the youngest, little Olive, was only three years of age.

Then Miss Moseley had taken the children to her home, and had tried to do her duty by them. The old lady never much liked Olive. She would not have owned, even to herself, that Olive's resemblance to her mother had augured to do with this want of affection; but to-day, as she watched the slight figure disappear among the shrubs and trees in the old garden, she could not help thinking how like she was to the beautiful girl who had once held entire possession of Everard Moseley's heart.

Olive was always a trial to her aunt, and when, at the age of eighteen, she left "Madame Borley's Select School for Young Ladies," of course she had selected a dearest friend and confidante, and equally of course, Miss Moseley did not approve of the selection.

She had gone to Madame Borley herself to inquire as to the antecedents of the young Amy Russell whom Olive had taken such a fancy to, and Madame Borley had sat very upright, and had looked uncommonly stately, as she informed Miss Moseley that Miss Russell was a lady, and assured her that none but gentlemen's daughters were ever admitted to her establishment, or ever could be.

Miss Moseley had to be satisfied with this, and Olive had accompanied her friend to Surrey—and what had been the end of it?

The old lady thought wrathfully of the letter she had received soon after Olive returned home from a person of whose existence she had not till then been aware, a Mr. Edward Russell.

Such an absurd letter too, the old lady considered it, asking to be allowed to correspond with Olive during his absence in India, telling of his love for the beautiful girl, and his hope that soon he would be in a position to return and claim her for his bride.

Miss Moseley's reply to his letter had at least one merit—it was concise. The language was well and carefully chosen, and left nothing to be hoped for.

That was the last she had heard from Mr. Edward Russell. Of course, he was in India now; in fact Mrs. Russell mentioned in her note of invitation that she and Amy were very lonely, and missed the only son and brother so much.

This did not make any difference, however. Miss Moseley wished the intimacy between Olive and Amy entirely broken off.

"How do I know what messages he sends the girl through Amy?" she thought, suspiciously.

Finding that Olive did not return to the house Miss Moseley decided on walking in the gardens. At the foot of the lower garden she found a very disconsolate figure curled up on the garden seat under the huge elms.

"What are you doing here, Olive?"

The girl looked up with an expression that, in the days of her childhood, had sometimes been seen when unusually harsh measures had been taken with her, and answered:

"Nothing."

"Have you practised this morning?"

"No."

"Have you attended to the charitable work I spoke to you about?"

"No."

"Have you written, declining Amy Russell's invitation?"

"No."

This last a very pitiful little "No;" and after a pause, in a choking voice: "Oh, Aunt Ann, mayn't I go to Mrs. Russell's?"

Miss Moseley adjusted her head-dress solemnly, and replied, severely:

"Olive, we had a conversation on the subject of your visit to Surrey this morning if I am not mistaken, and the matter was settled."

Olive knew that it would be useless to say anything more, and she walked back to the house and up the stately stone steps, with an intense hatred of the place and everything connected with it.

She went into the drawing-room quietly enough, however, and practised for some time; then cut out the four linen blouses Miss Moseley had provided for four poverty-stricken little urchins in a back street, then sat down to write to Amy Russell.

This was no easy task; she could give no reason for her aunt's refusal—she did not know what to say. Finally, she put the letter by till the afternoon, and went down to luncheon.

Miss Moseley did not refer to the events of the morning, but, with a little more than her usual flurry and excitement, when luncheon was over, handed the young girl a letter to read.

Olive took it, wondering.

It was addressed to Miss Moseley, a short note, signed Henry Atherton, asking that lady's permission to woo, and if possible win her niece, Miss Olive Moseley, to be the writer's wife.

The girl's clear face flushed to a bright rose colour as she read the letter through and gave it back to her aunt.

The old lady deposited it in her pocket, adjusted her cap, turned round the heavy rings on her slender hands, so that the light flashed and gleamed from the glowing rubies and the one great diamond she always wore, and then asked :

"Have you anything to say, Olive?"

"I do not like Mr. Atherton."

"Not like Mr. Atherton?" The old lady sat very erect in the indignation she felt at such an answer to her question. "It will be in every respect a very suitable match for you. He is of the proper age—his position is good—he is owner of a beautiful place—what more could you wish for?"

Olive did not speak, so the old lady continued:

"I answered his note, giving him the permission he asks for, and when he comes to see you I shall expect you to receive him in a becoming manner."

Olive still said nothing, but turned to leave the room.

"Olive."

The girl paused.

"You understand what I have just said, do you not?"

"Yes."

Then Olive went, and Miss Moseley leaned back in her chair, saying to herself :

"I suppose she is thinking of that sentimental young Russell, with his fine promises, etc. Gone to India to seek his fortune too; probably he has got a beggarly clerkship in some government office there. Nice prospect that would be for a girl brought up as Olive has been."

The old lady paused, nodded her head, and added :

"She shall marry Henry Atherton."

When Olive reached her own room she began to cry—not as girls usually do, a mere shower of sparkling teardrops. On the contrary, deep, heavy sobs shook her slight frame, and made every quivering breath she drew more and more agonising to her.

She was not crying about Henry Atherton—oh! no; but memory brought before her a fair, blonde-haired man, whose frank, blue eyes had looked fondly into hers, while he told the old, sweet story that men have told and maidens listened to since the days of the creation.

The whole scene came back to her—the smooth stretch of lawn, with the flower-beds of quaint design, in which were gleaming lilies, fair clusters of hydrangea, and sweet old-fashioned carnations—the broad belt of shrubbery under which they stood—and the glorious moonlight, flooding house, lawn, and garden in one brilliant glow of loveliness.

Again she felt the pressure of the strong arm around her waist; again she heard the true, manly voice telling her that it might be years before he could call her wife, for his mother and Amy were dependent upon him; but that life should hold no other hope for him, and no word of love should pass his lips till they were again pressed to her.

Then the one letter she had received after Miss Moseley's kind and gentle epistle had reached the young man who was so soon to leave home and friends behind him—a letter that explained why he could not write to her during his absence, reiterated the promises made at parting, and begged her to be true and patient, and not to lightly throw away the strong man's love she had won.

The girl's sobs hushed themselves here. True? Yes, she would be true to him in spite of Aunt Ann and Mr. Henry Atherton. Patient? Yes, she would try to be patient, but it was very hard. If she could have a letter once in a while the weary waiting would not seem quite so wearisome.

She was roused from the long reverie that

followed the passionate fit of weeping by a servant knocking at the door.

"A gentleman to see Miss Olive Moseley."

Olive took the bit of pasteboard, read the name, and flung it contemptuously from her.

Then she twisted afresh the great coil of gold brown hair, and looking in the mirror, saw the face of a sorrowful, nineteen-year-old girl, with low, broad forehead, and smooth blooming cheeks; the great eyes flashing out defiantly, and the sweet red lips very firmly compressed.

Then she went down to the drawing-room.

Mr. Atherton awaited her there. He was a man over whose head a good many summers had passed, and this was the third time that "Love had him in his net," at least it was the third time he had been compelled to seek a wife, for Providence had removed the first Mrs. Atherton some years and the second Mrs. Atherton some months before. He was rather below the medium height, a thin, spare face, with high, white forehead, and carefully brushed sandy hair. The bushy eyebrows overhung faded blue eyes, that in their day might have flashed and glowed, as did those of Edward Russell when he took his last "Good bye" from Olive Moseley. Of this, however, Olive had grave doubts.

He had a becoming sense of his own importance, and his just and righteous pride in himself and his position received a severe shock when Olive, in low but distinct words, thanked him for the honour done her and declined his proposal.

Did he hear aright? Had not his small, thin ears deceived him? Miss Moseley's dependent niece or cousin, or whatever she was—this slight, dark-eyed girl—refuse HIM. It is no wonder that for a few minutes Mr. Atherton sat speechless with astonishment.

Then he requested Miss Olive's reasons, and Miss Olive had none to give—no, she did not wish to reconsider the matter—and at length the mortified suitor bowed himself out of the young lady's presence and retired.

Miss Moseley was in a state of unwonted excitement that evening. She had dressed in her stiffest silk, and the most wonderful of her wonderful caps had been placed on her flaxen front.

A little before six o'clock she entered the drawing-room in all the pomp of rustling attire, flowing lace, and fluttering ribbons.

The room was empty. Could Mr. Atherton and Olive be walking in the garden? She waited a few minutes, then rang the bell to inquire for Miss Olive. The maid returned in a short time.

Miss Olive was in her own room, but would be down directly.

And directly Olive came, it must be confessed with some inward misgivings, but outwardly as calm and self-possessed as ever.

"Where is Mr. Atherton?"

"Mr. Atherton left here more than an hour ago," answered Olive, quietly.

Miss Moseley looked at the girl long and critically.

"Olive Moseley, did you refuse Henry Atherton?"

"I did."

The old lady sat dumb—then:

"You refused him—one of the best matches in Weyford?"

The cap ribbons fluttered vehemently, the hands locked and unlocked themselves, as Olive had seen them do before when her aunt was under the influence of strong excitement.

Olive said nothing. In the hush that preceded the storm a servant threw open the door and announced:

"Dinner."

Why repeat the conversation that took place when dinner was over? A conversation that was principally sustained by the elder lady, who heaped upon the orphan girl the benefits done to her and the ingratitude shown to the giver of those benefits.

Certain sarcastic allusions were made also to the lover who was not able to marry her, who in all probability had by this time forgotten her.

Olive bore all as quietly as she could, but from that time her home at Moseley House was less happy than it had been before.

Her aunt evinced her displeasure in a thousand little ways, known only to those who have lived under the benign influence of some sweet woman who has been mortally offended.

It seemed sometimes as if she could bear it no longer, but she had something to hope for—something to look forward to—that was Edward Russell's return to England.

Each day that passed so weary by lessened the duration of his absence. She never heard from him, but none the less did she feel sure that he was faithful to her.

In the occasional letters she had from Amy the loved brother's name was usually mentioned, and that was all.

Still another year rolled round, and the great gardens of Moseley House were again lit up with a summer glow of warmth and colour.

One afternoon a letter was brought to Olive from Amy Russell. The girl opened it with the nervous expectancy she always felt when Amy's letters were received.

After reading a few lines this is what met her astonished gaze:

"MAMMA and I are rejoicing over the news just received from Edward. He has been very successful in business and is coming home. Not only that, but—would you believe it?—is going to bring a wife with him. Just fancy my having a sister! He does not give us a description of the lady, but says he hopes we will be pleased with his choice."

Olive did not faint nor cry out, but sat white and still, with the letter tightly crushed in her small hands.

Edward Russell married! It could not be. Why, the scene in the old garden in Surrey was as fresh and as vivid as if it had only happened yesterday.

She read the letter through again. Then she went to her little writing-desk and from the innermost compartment took out the one letter that had so many times comforted her in her trouble and loneliness and read that through. As she did so a great wave of anger swept over her.

What right had he to pen such words? What right to ask her to wait patiently for him? Had she not done it, fully and willingly? And this was the end. He had found a fairer face and loved it. He was going to bring his wife home. She wondered if they would wander about the paths and breathe the sweet breath of the lilies and carnations in the quaint old garden.

How could she bear it? Dry-eyed and tearless she paced her room with quick, nervous steps, shivering in the warmth of the July day. What had she done more than others that she should suffer so terribly?

She looked back upon her unhappy childhood—then the years of her girlhood, for the most part passed at school—the handsome, careless brother, who was brother to her in name only—the sincere friendship she had felt for Amy Russell—the happy visit at Amy's home—

The dinner-bell interrupted her here, and she went down after as little delay as possible to hear her aunt's high-pitched, querulous tones finding fault with her for being so late, and complaining of her brother Everard because he had not written to her for more than three weeks.

Then the same round of duties went on from day to day. Only Olive no longer had a letter which she had been wont to read very often to refer to now.

A few light ashes borne way on the summer's breeze were the end of the undying love and faith that the letter typified.

When the mellow August days had come Miss Moseley went one afternoon to see an old friend who was ill, and during her absence Olive whiled away the quiet hours playing sad, dreamy melodies in the great, cool drawing-room.

March 5, 1881.

The words of an old song, beginning :

I once had gold and silver—
I thought them without end;
I once had gold and silver—
I thought I had a friend—

kept sounding in her ears, and finally she left the piano and began looking over the great pile of music on the old rack to try and find the song.

While she was so doing the door opened and a gentleman was shown in. Olive rose and faced the stranger, and for a moment they looked at each other.

In spite of the bronzed complexion and the heavy beard Olive recognised him. And Mr. Russell—he saw the slight figure, the beautiful eyes, the gold brown hair, the sweet red lips. He came forward with outstretched hands.

"Olive!"

It was the same voice that had bidden so sorrowful an adieu to her, only now there was a glad, triumphant ring in it. What did it mean?

She did not speak, but she trembled so excessively that she was obliged to put out one hand and rest it on the piano.

"Olive, have you no word for me? Am I forgotten?"

"Why are you here?" she gasped.

Mr. Russell looked surprised.

"Have you forgotten what you promised me before I went away, Olive?"

"I have forgotten nothing, but you—you where is your wife?"

"My wife! I do not understand you, Olive."

"Amy wrote me that you were married—that you were going to bring a wife home with you, at least, and I—I—"

She broke off with a sob.

"There must be some mistake. I wrote that I was coming home, that I was now in a position to marry, and they must prepare a welcome for the young bride, that, God willing, I should soon bring to them. I never dreamed that they would think of my marrying out there. I never thought of marrying anyone but you."

Olive looked at him earnestly; the grave, tender eyes were watching her closely. With a sudden, impulsive movement she put out her hands. They were quickly clasped, and she was drawn to the shelter of loving arms—poor, weary Olive—and fond kisses were pressed on her pale face.

Who can describe the happiness of such a meeting? All the sorrow, care and trouble of the past was forgotten; all that the future might have in store was not thought of. They were together.

After a long time Olive showed her lover his sister's letter.

"I am so sorry, darling," he said. "I intended as soon as I reached England to come to you and make arrangements for our marriage, then go home to Surrey for a few days till you were ready to be my wife."

"Haven't you been home yet?" asked Olive, shyly.

"Of course not. Who so near and dear to me as my promised wife?"

"Oh, Mr. Russell, Aunt Ann has come," cried Olive, at the sound of footsteps, and she started away from her lover's side.

That gentleman drew himself up proudly and prepared for an introduction to his enemy, Miss Moseley.

Olive never knew how she went through the prescribed form. She heard her aunt's clear, shrill voice inquire :

"Mr. Edward Russell, of Woking?" and she heard her lover acknowledge his identity and recall to the lady's mind the letters he had written to her more than two years before, asking to be allowed to correspond with Miss Olive Moseley.

Olive left the room at this point, and for an hour afterwards a resolute woman and an equally resolute man discussed the question of Olive Moseley's marriage.

How it was decided may be inferred from the fact that a little later Mr. Russell and Olive walked down the shaded path of the old garden

and through the tangled shubbery till at length they stood beside the tiny, rippling river. Then Mr. Russell quoted from his favourite poem :

"Joy after grief is more complete,
and as he bent down and kissed the sweet lips
of the girl beside him, he finished the stanza:

"And kisses never fall so sweet
As when long-parted lovers meet."

FACETIA.

ADJUSTMENT.

OUR STATION-MASTER (to old Jinks, whom he had kindly provided with a foot-warmer on a journey down the line to see his sick daughter): "Well, did you find the benefit of it, Master Jinks?"

OLD JINKS: "Oh, aye, thankee, Mr. Green. Tha' there box o' hot water tha' wor uncommon comfor'able, sure-ly. I sat on 'm the whol' o' the way, an' tha' did warm me up-to-rights, I can tell 'ee!" Punch.

SIXTY PER CENT.

AN INDIGUANT TRAVELLER, who, during the late snowstorm, thought he was overcharged by a cabman, said he felt he was in the hands of the Jehus.

PUNCH'S PROVERBAL PHILOSOPHY.

THE WIND IS ILL-TEMPERED TO THE SHORN LAMB.
Those who live in glass-houses should not take repairing leases.

A GIFT-HORSE IN THE HAND IS WORTH SEVERAL IN THE BUSH.

YOU CANNOT MAKE A SILK PURSE OUT OF A SOW-WESTER.

YOU SHOULD NOT LOOK A BIRD IN THE HAND IN THE MOUTH.

THESE ARE REASONS IN SUCKING EGGS, IF THE EGGS ARE FRESH.

A BUY WORD.—CASH.

PUNCH.

A POLITICAL WAY OF PUTTING IT.

NELLIE: "So I hear you are to marry an M.P. shortly, May?"

MAY: "Yes. I have always been mad on politics, you know; and the other day Henry having suggested my immediate annexation (allowing me Home Rule, of course), we found we could both agree on a treaty, which I'm happy to say the governor has ratified." FUN.

THE OLD STORY.

OH, I FELT SO BROKEN-HEARTED, WHEN MY LOVE AND I WERE PARTED!

I WAS HOPELESS, I WAS JOYLESS, I WAS MELANCHOLY MAD.

NOT A SOUL CAME EVER NEAR ME, TO COMFORT ME OR TO CHEER ME,

FOR IN POPULAR OPINION I WAS DRIFTING TO THE BAD.

IF THE DATE OF MY AFFECTION HAS ESCAPED MY RECOLLECTION,

WHEN YOU LOOK AT MY CONDITION YOU CAN HARDLY WONDER WHY;

THOUGH DISTINCTLY I REMEMBER IT WAS IN A BЛЕAK DECEMBER

THAT SHE TOLD ME HOW SHE LOVED ME —AND SHE TOLD A JOLLY LIE!

WHEN I THINK UPON THE FEATURES OF THAT LOVELIEST OF CREATURES,

OF HER SMILING, HER BEGUILING, AND THE WAY SHE DID HER HAIR,

I CAN CONJURE UP A NOTION OF THE DEPTH OF MY DEVOTION,

AND THE LENGTHS A FELLOW GOES TO IF HE'S DRIVEN TO DESPAIR.

YOU MAY SEARCH THROUGH EVERY NATION, IN WHATEVER SITUATION,

THOUGH I OWN THAT SUCH A JOURNEY WOULD BE TROUBLESOME TO TRY,

AND YOU HAPPILY MAY DISCOVER AS UNFORTUNATE A LOVER,

BUT YOU NEVER WILL ENCOUNTER SUCH A JOLLY FOOL AS I!" FUN.

A PIECE OF IMATCH-INATION.—There are some "matches" which can only be struck on Fun.

BRITANNIA'S TRANS-VALENTINE.—The insurrection of the Boers.

FUN.

A VALENTINE.

THOUGH NOWADAYS FEW PERSONS TO ENTHUSIASM LOVE INCLINE,

LET ME BE ONE OF THOSE RARE FEW;

LET ME BE YOUR—OH, DO, DO, DO!

LET ME BE YOUR ENTHU, THU, THU—

ENTHUSIASTIC VALENTINE.

ALTHOUGH YOUR FEELINGS MAY BE CRUEL,

EL AND MAY NOT RESPOND TO MINE,

INDEED I WILL BE TRUE, TRUE, TRUE,

TO YOU, YOU ONLY, YOU, YOU, YOU;

AND IF MY HEART YOU ONLY KNEW

I'M SURE YOU'D NOT REFU-FU-FU

REFUSE TO BE MY VALENTINE. JUDY.

HARD.

YES, HE HAD DROPPED HIS EYE ON JUST THE VALENTINE HE WOULD HAVE LIKED TO SEND TO THE GIRL HE ADORED, AND HE WAS COUNTING OUT HIS MONEY TO SEE IF IT WOULD RUN TO IT, WHEN WHO SHOULD COME BY BUT THE ADORED HERSELF! AWKWARD, WASN'T IT? IT?

JUDY.

A STANDING GRIEVANCE.—PARNELL ON HIS MOONSHINE.

AT THE GROSVENOR GALLERY.

MAMMA: "MY DEAR, IF YOU GAZE AT YOUR PORTRAIT SO LONG YOU WILL ATTRACT ATTENTION."

FAIR DAUGHTER: "I CANNOT HELP IT. I MUST TAKE NOTE OF EVERY POINT, OR HOW ON EARTH CAN I BE EXPECTED TO LOOK LIKE MY LIKENESS?"

MOONSHINE.

THE RAGE OF RAILWAY DIRECTORS.—DEMUR-RAGE.

MOONSHINE.

BITING WINDS.—GRAW-EASTERS. MOONSHINE.

HOME OF SNOBS.—PIC-CAD-DILLY. MOONSHINE.

MOONSHINE.

ESTHETICS.

MR. TOMKINS: "BELLA, I HAVE JOINED THE KYRLE SOCIETY."

MRS. TOMKINS: "AND WHAT'S THE KYRLE SOCIETY?"

MR. T.: "THE KYRLE SOCIETY IS PATRONISED BY ALL THE FASHIONABLES WITH LONG HAIR, AND IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING BEAUTY HOME TO THE DWELLINGS OF THE HUMBLER CLASSES."

MRS. T.: "WE'RE THE HUMBLER CLASSES I DON'T DENY, TOM. BUT THERE'LL BE A ROW IF YOU GO BRINGING ANY BEAUTY HOME HERE, THAT'S ALL!"

MOONSHINE.

THE LATE SEVERE THAW.

DORINDA: "NO, I AM NOT LIVELY. I SEEM TO HAVE HAD A HEADACHE EVER SINCE THE FROST WENT AWAY."

HEPBURN: "AH, DEAR, IT IS TO BE EXPECTED; THE THAW HAS FOUND OUT ALL OUR WEAK PLACES!"

MOONSHINE.

A ROARING TRADE.—LION FEEDING.

MOONSHINE.

FOR A DEAD-LOCK.—A SKELETON KEY.

MOONSHINE.

HAPPY THAW-T.

THE MELTED ICE IS SUCH A SUBLIME SIGHT THAT EVERYBODY GAZES ON IT WITH-AWE.

FUNNY FOLKS.

THE "WEIGH" OF ALL FLESH.—THE BUTCHER'S SCALES.

FUNNY FOLKS.

NATURAL SYMPATHY.

PAPA: "THAT PICTURE SHOWS THE STORY OF PROMETHEUS AND THE VULTURE THAT FEED ON HIS LIVER. EVERY DAY THE VULTURE DEVOURED IT, AND EVERY NIGHT IT GREW FOR HIM TO EAT IT AGAIN."

SYMPATHETIC CHILD: "POOR DEAR OLD VULTURE, HOW SICK HE MUST HAVE BEEN OF LIVER EVERY DAY."

FUNNY FOLKS.

ONE OF THE "DOGS OF WAR"—SIR GEORGE COLLEY.

FUNNY FOLKS.

APPROPRIATE.

THERE IS A TALK OF A JOURNAL TO REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF THE KYRLE SOCIETY. IT WILL BE CALLED "THE KYRLE PAPER."

FUNNY FOLKS.

A NINE DAYS' WONDER.—That of a puppy on first opening its eyes.
Funny Folks.

AN INCORRIGIBLE "LOAFER."—The baker.
Funny Folks.

A "SERIOUS CHARGE."—A charge of dynamite.
Funny Folks.

UNAPPRECIATED COMPLIMENT.

(Paid to Miss Smith, the vigorous pianiste, who has just accompanied young Brown, the amateur tenor robusto, in his new song.)

AMERICAN: "Wasl, now, that's real smart, that is, Miss Smith. I'd have backed either for loudest—yew or the singist—but yew've licked."

Funny Folks.

BOARD WAGES.—Directors' fees.
Funny Folks.

VALID EXCUSES.

LANDLORD: "Now, Pat, you're well enough off. Surely you're no valid excuses for not paying the rent."

TENANT: "Ah, sure, yer honour, but it's a poor widd'y'd man that I am, wid me crippled old mother to rear!"
Funny Folks.

CASH-UAL WAEDS.—Those in Chancery.
Funny Folks.

THE bishop most calculated to cement a union between the divided sections of the Church: The Bishop of "Soder" and Man.
Funny Folks.

STATISTICS.

TRADE OF CANADA.—The returns of trade and navigation for Canada, recently published, although they end on June 30 last, show that Canada had already benefited by the improvement in business, as, with the exception of imports from the United States, there was an increase over 1879 under every head. The imports (gross) amounted to 86,489,747 dols., and the exports to 87,911,458 dols. Exports to Great Britain, 45,846,062 dols.; imports from Great Britain, 34,461,224 dols.; exports to United States, 33,349,909 dols.; imports from United States, 29,346,948 dols. Whilst the trade of Canada with the United States had sunk by 8,000,000 dols., her trade with us had increased by 13,000,000 dols.

OUR GAME BILL.—An elaborate estimate of the game consumed in Great Britain shows that the consumption has increased nearly two-thirds during the last thirty years. The numbers estimated for 1880 are 610,000 grouse and black-game at 4s. per bird, £102,000; 376,000 partridges, at 2s., £37,600; 335,000 pheasants, at 4s., £27,000; 500,000 hares, at 3s. 6d., £27,500; 9,000,000 rabbits, at 1s. 6d., £27,500; total head, 9,731,000; total value, £361,600; to which is added £30,000 for woodcock, snipe, wild-duck, etc.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CIDER CAKE.—One cup of sugar, half cup of butter, one egg, well beaten, one large cup of cider, one teaspoonful of soda, flour sufficient to make it as thick as pound cake. One cup of raisins can be added if desired.

BEEF AU GRATIN.—Take cold beef, either boiled or roasted, and cut it in thin slices. Grease a tin pan with butter, dust with bread crumbs, put in a little chopped parsley and lay on the slices of beef. Put salt, pepper and parsley on top, dust with bread crumbs, drop on lemon juice and a little broth, just to cover the bottom of the pan, and place it in the oven.

CABBAGE SALAD may be made with hard-boiled eggs chopped, or, with raw eggs beaten into the dressing; for one small head, or half of a good-sized one, use three eggs, beat them till

they are light, then add six tablespoonfuls of vinegar, two tablespoonfuls of made mustard, a piece of butter the size of a walnut. Cook this dressing until it begins to thicken; when it is cold pour it over the chopped cabbage. When boiled eggs are used chop the whites of the eggs with the cabbage, and after rubbing the yolks till they are fine stir them into the dressing. When the eggs are cooked the rest of the dressing does not need cooking.

FOR WANT OF THOUGHT.

How many souls
Who would have done
Their very best
Beneath the sun,
Have sorrow spread,
And ruin wrought,
And all, yes, all,
For want of thought.

That little breath,
That tiny word,
Would scarce, they cry,
A leaf have stirred;
And yet what woe.
And care it brought,
All, as you say,
For want of thought.

A name was signed—
A mere pen's stroke;
A friend was wronged;
A heart then broke;
A love, once strong,
Had come to naught;
And all, yes, all,
For want of thought.

His magic wand
The tempter yields;
The red cup glows,
The tempted yields—
The trap is sprung;
The prey is caught—
And all, yes, all,
For want of thought.

A maiden loves
A suitor bold;
But sells herself
For pity gold;
The heart she leaves
Can ne'er be bought
As was her hand,
For want of thought.

Then stop to think,
While here below;
Ay, ponder well
As you go;
The battle win,
That must be fought;
Lose not the day
For want of thought.

MISCELLANEOUS.

It is the present intention of Her Majesty the Queen to hold a review of Volunteers in Windsor Park some time during the month of May.

DONALDSON, the submarine diver, has wagered to jump into the Niagara River from the Suspension Bridge on the 24th of May.

DR. MULLER, of Geneva, has made a calculation, in which he estimates the number of plant species existing on the globe to reach a minimum total of 250,000.

MR. MACKEN, one of the jury in the late State trials, has been unanimously elected a member of the Land League, it being mentioned that he was for an acquittal.

If a person of fair complexion exposes himself to the electric light for some time in examining

the action of lamps, the hands and cheeks will show all the symptoms of "sunburn" even in midwinter.

THE eucalyptus trees planted in the malarious districts of Algiers, Italy, and the south of France are said to have made those districts healthy.

THE Princess of Wales, according to report, has ordered several dresses to be copied from the pictures in the Louvre, representing the costumes worn at the Court of Valois.

SOME Swedish papers have mentioned the report of negotiations for the marriage of the Swedish Crown Prince, Prince Gustaf, with the eldest daughter of the Prince of Wales.

THE total number of votes given at the last election for those members of Parliament who obey the instructions of Mr. Parnell was only 29,053, the aggregate number of registered electors in Ireland being 231,530.

SPONGE paper, made by adding finely-divided sponge to paper pulp, has been used in France for dressing wounds. It absorbs water readily and retains moisture for a long time; it is therefore applicable to many purposes in the arts and manufactures.

AN Italian professor has made some very agreeable researches, resulting in the discovery that vegetable perfumes exercise a positively healthful influence on the atmosphere, converting its oxygen into ozone, and thus increasing its oxidising influence. He recommends the cultivation of flowers in all marshy districts.

Algiers is reported to have a river of veritable ink. Two streams, one starting from a region where the soil is ferruginous, the other from a peat swamp, flow together and form the river, whose inky constituency is due to the mixing of the iron and gallic acid which the two tributary streams respectively contain.

THE Mentone papers report two suicides at Monte Carlo. Some days ago a man rushed out of the gaming room exclaiming, "I am done for; I have lost 200,000 francs." On the staircase he drew a revolver from his pocket and blew his brains out. The other man, wandering on the shore, was seen to sit down on a rock and rest his head on his hands. A minute after a detonation was heard. He too had blown his brains out.

MRS. SHAW, wife of a working man, at present unemployed, and residing in Conyers Road, Byker, Newcastle-on-Tyne, was delivered the other day of four female children, one of which has two teeth. Two of the children died within a few hours of birth, and the third is not expected to live. The fourth, however, and the mother, are doing well. Considerable curiosity has been evinced in the children, and many visitors have left substantial tokens of sympathy.

A PROPOSAL to extend the cheque system has been made and is likely to be adopted. The proposal is to issue packets of omnibus cheques of from twopence to sixpence to the public. They would be sold at a discount to induce the public to invest in them. The omnibus owners expect that it would be a gain to them, preventing the peculation of the conductors, and it would be a convenience to the public, who do not want to be bothered with getting change from the conductor. Forgery might put an end to the scheme.

MR. FAWCETT's Postage Stamp Saving System has been put to a use which neither he nor anyone else contemplated. Business men are, of course, aware of the large number of accounts that are daily settled by payment in postage stamps, especially in instances where the amounts due are below 5s. One can easily imagine that the duty paid by firms—such as music sellers, who do extensive business in this way—to the Post Office Authorities, for converting their stamps into currency amounts to a considerable sum in the course of a year. To evade this some houses have hit upon the following plan: Instead of weekly changing their stamps and refunding sixpence in the pound they have opened various accounts under different names under the new system, and weekly deposit on interest that which before they were obliged to pay discount for.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS should in all cases furnish us with their names and addresses. Letters signed simply with initials or a nom de plume may not always receive immediate attention, as our space is limited. No charge is made under any circumstances for advertisements appearing on this page.

E. W.—For rheumatism try, say, four ounces of salt-petre in one pint of alcohol; shake well, and bathe the parts affected; wetting red flannel with it, lay it on. It does not cure, but takes away the redness, reduces the swelling, and relieves the torment and agony.

S. B.—To make paste for paper take ten parts by weight of gum arabic, add three parts of sugar in order to prevent the gum from cracking; then add water until the desired consistency is obtained. If a very strong paste is required add a quantity of flour equal in weight to the gum, without boiling the mixture. The paste improves in strength when it begins to ferment.

C. M.—Ivory is readily rendered quite flexible by immersion in a solution of pure phosphoric acid (specific gravity 1.13) until it loses, or partially loses, its opacity, when it is washed in clean cold water and dried. In this state it is as flexible as leather, but gradually hardens by exposure to dry air. Immersion in hot water, however, restores its softness and pliancy. The following method may also be employed: Put the ivory to soak in three ounces nitric acid mixed with fifteen ounces water. In three or four days the ivory will be soft.

A CONSTANT READER.—Wash the head twice a day with soft soap and warm water; when dry apply a linen rag dipped in ammonia.

INQUIRING MAUDE.—Write to the editor.

MARTHA.—We have painfully endeavoured to decipher your letter, but have been unable to discover its meaning.

W. P.—We have ourselves seen it stated somewhere that the top part of, say, a carriage wheel travels faster than that which touches the ground, but the common sense which nature has bestowed upon us inclines us to disbelieve the assertion.

RIP VAN WINKLE.—1. The "Sphinx" contributions arrived too late, or they would have been inserted. 2. The poem "The Treasures of the Deep" is not up to the standard for publication.

A DESPAIRING GIRL.—1. See our answer last week to "S. S." respecting "blackheads." A tolerably strong solution of borax and water with which to bathe the face is sometimes recommended for the removal of pimples. 2. Use glycerine and elder-flower water or some mild emollient soap. 3. Study to preserve good health and your lips will not require any artificial colouring.

WILL HENRY.—All communications have to pass through the editor's hands.

J. E. C.—Send to Cassell and Co., or to the office of the "Exchange and Mart." From either you can obtain a book containing such instructions as you require.

M. A. B.—1. Take off your gloves before partaking of supper. 2. Colour of hair red-brown. 3. Handwriting susceptible of improvement by practice—not very good at present.

LADY ANNA.—1. You must make your own selection from the numerous dentifrices offered to the public, or take common whiting or soot and salt. 2. The complexion produced by fresh air, exercise and plain food is the very best of all. 3. A mixture of three ounces of castor oil and one ounce of brandy with occasional use of a stiff metallic brush will promote, if anything will, the growth of the hair.

C. H.—Your story is too crude for publication—it is also too short.

EVA.—Love; according to some authorities "Worthy of Affection."

W. B.—During the dead of winter any living plant which looks green adds to the cheerfulness of a room, and a mass of beautiful verdure is obtained by the following expedient: Take about twenty or thirty ears of wheat and tie them together, leaving the straws about two inches long. Hang them up for a few days, keeping them sprinkled with water; the top will soon become a perfect pyramid of verdure, and will retain its beauty for several weeks. This simple plan may be put in practice at any time in the winter months.

CIS, LIZZIE and SARAH, three friends, would like to correspond with three young men about twenty-three. CIS is eighteen, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes. LIZZIE is nineteen, tall, brown hair, blue eyes. SARAH is medium height, fair, grey eyes.

ARTHUR E., twenty, tall, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen or twenty with a view to matrimony.

ELECTRICAL JACK, MINNOTTI TEST and DYNAMITE, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Electrical Jack is twenty-three, medium height, dark, good-looking. Minnotti Test is nineteen, tall, blue eyes, fond of home and children. Dynamite is tall, dark hair and eyes.

JACK CADE and CURLY CHING, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Jack Cade is twenty-one, good-looking. Curly Ching is twenty-one, tall, auburn hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

HUDSON, twenty-seven, medium height, fair, good-looking, fond of music and dancing, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty with a view to matrimony.

ROSIE and JENNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two mechanics. Rosie is twenty, medium height, fair, dark hair and eyes, good-looking. Jennie is eighteen, tall, fair, brown hair, blue eyes.

"HE COMES TO-MORROW!"

THE cottage was lowly and quaint and old;
And the summer sun was its only gold;
But there a rich young lover strayed
To win for his own a winsome maid.

And when the meadows were bare and brown,
And each tree had dropped its leafy crown,
One starlit eve, as he held her hand,
He pledged his troth with a golden band.

Yet, still in that home the maiden dwells,
But a newer song her young heart swells;
And her daily task with her song keeps time
In one continuous, gladsome rhyme.

"He comes to-morrow!" The sunshine bright
May flood the earth with a sea of light,
Or the glowing face of the sun may stay
Behind dark clouds the live-long day!

"He comes to-morrow!" With anxious care—
In the way he praised—she braids her hair;
She tides her room, and the window shows
The colour he liked and the flowers he chose!

"He comes to-morrow!" And now she holds
In her hand a robe; and its sleepy folds,
That fall round her form like a mute caress,
Have the lustrous sheen of a bridal dress.

"He comes to-morrow!" And love will grace,
With a new, fresh light, her fair young face;
And the joy in her shining eyes will say,
"This is my beautiful wedding day!"

All joy to the happy, hopeful bride!
And joy to him who will stand by her side!
May he ne'er regret the summer day
When first to the cottage he learned to stray!

And when life's fields grow bare and brown,
And youth drops down its sunny crown,
Still, o'er each silvery, weary head,
May love its lasting blessing shed. I. S. U.

NESTOR, eighteen, medium height, fond of home and dancing, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

A. W., H. M. and T. W., three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. A. W. is twenty-two, medium height, dark, fond of home and dancing. H. M. is twenty-three, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition. T. W. is twenty-one, tall, fair, fond of home and music. Respondents must be from eighteen to twenty-two, good-looking, fond of home.

GERTRUDE and LAURA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Gertrude is twenty, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of home and children. Laura is eighteen, medium height, light hair, blue eyes, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be twenty and twenty-two, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

ROUGH and SMOOTH, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Rough is twenty-one, fair, medium height, fond of home and music. Smooth is twenty-one, medium height, fond of home and children.

ANNABELLA and MARGARET, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Annabella is tall, dark, of a loving disposition. Margaret is tall, fair, fond of home and children.

NATALIE and BLANCHE, two sisters, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Natalie is twenty-four, tall, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music. Blanche is twenty-one, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of singing and dancing. Respondents must be about twenty-five, tall, dark, fond of home.

LENA, twenty-two, tall, good-looking, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man between twenty-four and twenty-eight with a view to matrimony.

LIZ, nineteen, dark, good-looking, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony.

V. C. and O. E. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. V. C. is nineteen, and O. E. S. twenty-one.

FELICIA and KITTY, two sisters, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Felicia is eighteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes. Kitty is twenty, medium height, dark, dark hair and eyes.

ROSETTA C. S. and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Rosetta C. S. is seventeen, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music. Annie is sixteen, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between seventeen and eighteen, dark, good-looking, of a loving disposition.

LILY and VIOLET, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men between twenty and twenty-four. Lily is eighteen, golden hair, dark eyes. Violet is nineteen, grey eyes.

KATE, seventeen, dark hair, grey eyes, would like to correspond with a tall, fair, good-looking young man between eighteen and twenty.

D. MCC., twenty-seven, tall, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

BELLA, eighteen, tall, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony.

TOWER of REFUGEE and CASTLE MONA, two friends, would like to correspond with two mechanics. Tower of Refuge is twenty-one, tall, fair. Castle Mona is nineteen, dark, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about twenty-one, tall, good-looking.

HARVEST, twenty, tall, dark hair, fond of music and dancing, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be twenty, tall, fond of music and dancing.

HARRY H. H., a young American gentleman, would like to correspond with a tall, dark, good-looking young lady.

ALLIE and HARRIETTE, two friends, would like to correspond with two fair young gentlemen. Allie is nineteen, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, loving. Harriette is twenty-five, tall, black hair, blue eyes, good-looking.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

JESSIE is responded to by—C. M. F., twenty, tall, good-looking.

D. H. by—G. E. W., twenty-five, tall, dark, good-looking.

ETHEL by—Gerhold.

ROSE by—Therriague.

JES by—Rosebud, medium height, fair.

SPANNER by—Miley, medium height, dark.

JIR by—Millicent, twenty-one, dark, fond of music and dancing.

SPANNER by—Winifred, nineteen, fair, of a loving disposition.

BACHELORE by—A Widow, forty-four.

HETTIE by—W. J. K.

LAUREL by—J. W., twenty, medium height, dark, fond of home and music.

MAT by—J. B., twenty-one, tall, dark, fond of home and children.

S. E. I. by—Annie, thirty-five, tall.

H. S. by—Maggie, twenty-five, dark, fond of home.

BOMBO by—Juliet, nineteen.

SCHOOLMASTER by—Emmeline, nineteen.

A. M. by—Heartsease, seventeen, brown hair, grey eyes.

ZENONIA by—White Rose, eighteen, tall, light hair, blue eyes.

LILY by—Volunteer.

A. M. by—M. L., eighteen, good-looking.

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*+ We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily authors should retain copies.

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